

# Religions Past & Present

AN ELEMENTARY ACCOUNT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

*By*

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To

MY FRIEND AND PHYSICIAN

DR. JOHN STENHOUSE

A VERY SMALL RETURN FOR VERY MANY KINDNESSES





## PREFACE

THIS book is founded on a public course of lectures delivered a few years ago in and under the auspices of the University of Toronto.

The course attracted a large and consistent audience and hence I am encouraged to hope that this book may have an appeal to those interested in the subject with which it deals. There is much in it which was not included in the lectures and what was said in them as to the edifices associated with the various religions finds no place here.

"From bias free of every kind" should any book be which is not intentionally tendential. But that such a book as this is could be so is not possible. A writer must either believe or disbelieve in religion. He cannot be neutral as he may on some indifferent subject like relativity. It is too close up and too vital for that.

The present writer admits—it will be obvious—that he approaches his subject from the position of a firm and definite belief in Christianity as the final flower of religion and the revelation of God. It was not his intention to do more than allow that fact to peep out if it must do that.

## P R E F A C E

But those responsible for the publication of this volume thought otherwise and suggested that a final chapter setting forth the position of Christianity to other religions should be added.

I was willing to fall in with their suggestion and thus the chapter appears. Let it be noted that the opinions are my ~~opinions~~ and if the reader does not agree with them he can wrap himself up in the warm and comfortable assurance that his own opinion is to him worth more than that of anyone else.

TORONTO, APRIL, 1927.

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RELIGIONS  
PAST AND PRESENT



# RELIGIONS PAST AND PRESENT

## CHAPTER I

RELIGION—MEANING OF THE TERM—UNIVERSALITY OF THE FACT—SOME CONSIDERATIONS AS TO PRIMITIVE FOLK—THEIR IDEAS OF GOD AND RELIGION

"YOU may find," wrote Plutarch some nineteen hundred years ago, "communities without walls; without letters; without kings; without money; with no need of coinage; without acquaintance with theatres or gymnasia; but a community without holy rite, without a God, that uses not prayer, without sacrifice to win good or avert evil—no man ever saw or ever will see."

That Plutarch was abundantly justified in the first part at least of this statement no man now doubts though, even in the comparatively recent days of Lubbock and Parkman, there was difference of opinion. The contrary view has, as Jevons puts it, "gone to the limbo of dead controversies."

Reinach, no ally of revealed religion at any

rate, says that "man everywhere and at whatsoever period we observe him, is a religious animal; religiosity, as the positivists say, is the most essential of his attributes. No one any longer believes that quaternary man was ignorant of religion." Further as Dr. Malinowski has recently put it, "to a savage all is religion. He perpetually lives in a world of mysticism and ritualism." The object of this book is to summarise and consider some of the important facts which have been observed and the conclusions which have been formed on this universal attitude of man.

One should define one's terms above all things in any discussion and in no case is it more important to do so than in the instance of religion as to which a long chapter might be written on nothing but definitions.

Plato long ago in the Euthyphro discussed this matter and dealt with one idea which is prominent in the writings of Sir James Frazer, the idea which Jevons calls "higgling with heaven;" "do ut des" "you scratch me and I'll scratch you." That idea enters into the religion of many and indeed would appear to be the sole effort in that direction of at least a number, but it gives a false idea of religion as a whole.

In attempting to select a better definition let us look at a few first principles. Everywhere and at all times man has had a sense of something which is over and above what is natural and



## MEANING AND UNIVERSALITY

what is to be expected. That may be called the supernatural and as Lowie points out, that is all right so long as one is careful to bear in mind that the supernatural may be good or bad; that is to say may have to do with holy, or unholy influences. But the feeling is there and *Mana*, which will be discussed in the next chapter, is here clearly implicated. Further, that feeling leads to the conclusion that there is something, or some power, or some one superior to himself on whom man depends; that he is responsible to this power for what he does and what he omits doing and moreover that there is something wrong between him and this power, a something which ought to be put right and which can only be put right through prayer and sacrifice. This sense of sin, if we may apply that term, is almost universal. This whole point is well summarised by William James when he says "There is a certain uniform deliverance in which all religions appear to meet. It consists in two parts: (1) An uneasiness; and (2) its solution. (1) The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms is a sense that there is *something wrong about us* as we naturally stand. (2) The solution is a sense that *we are saved from the wrongness* by making proper connection with the higher powers." Finally everywhere and at all times man has felt that death is not the end of all things but that there is in his make-up a something, no doubt very vaguely conceived,

which still continues to exist after the visible body has slowly or rapidly returned to its ultimate constituents by the processes of inhumation or cremation. An exceedingly common accompaniment of the other idea is that the future state of this something will be determined by the deeds done in the flesh.

Hence a further reason for getting into right relations with the power which ultimately has the determination of what kind of an after life, happy or the reverse, is to fall to the lot of that something which survives man's bodily death.

Considering all these things we may perhaps take the following as a fairly adequate definition of religion:—"Religion is the effective desire to be in right relation to the power manifesting itself in the universe." Or, as proposed by Jastrow in somewhat more extended terms:—"it is the sum total of beliefs, sentiments and practices, individual and social, which have for their object a power which man recognizes as supreme, on which he depends, and with which he can enter (or has entered) into relation." These definitions seem to cover the matter as adequately as is possible for any definition, having regard to the vast number and variety of beliefs and customs which have to be taken into consideration. Yet all of these beliefs and customs can be brought within the compass of a single canvas constructed on the lines now to be indicated.

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First of all religion builds on faith—the faith in things unseen. Faith in a God or gods; in spirits; in fetishes; in the souls of the dead. Pure or adulterated is another matter yet to be discussed, but it is clear that all these are manifestations of a faith and that all must be taken into account. In the second place religion creates bonds for it means a cult with prayers private and in common; with sacrifices and communions. Thirdly, it gives laws, both moral laws and religious ordinances, and it demands accordance with these by appealing to a higher sanction and to the promise of a future life. Fourthly, it is accompanied by the marvellous. Fifthly, it nourishes an interior life and in that respect perhaps exercises its most important influence. Precisely as the requirements of everyday life demand certain activities and certain supplies in order that the man may live, so those of the inner life demand other activities and supplies, equally clamant, that it also may live. Such is the canvas on which we have to work. And to begin with, a general classification of religions must be made for they fall into one or another of five great classes.

### I. ATHEISM

Strictly speaking this class should not appear at all since a religion without a God is according to our definition, impossible. But the term is often

used and must be explained. It is applied to what might much more correctly be called and will in this book be called Philosophies, such as the teachings of Buddha and of Confucius before the followers of these philosophers had converted themselves into believers in religions which were never within the idea of the founders.

These founders really taught systems of ethics which were no more religions than the Ethical Societies and Rationalistic Leagues of to-day. In an account of a modern Ethical Society's proceedings I remarked the statement that a part of the time of the weekly meeting is to be devoted to silent meditation on the good. It is no great distance along the road, yet it is a start upon that which leads to the formation of a religion and certainly it may be said that none of these philosophies, save in the case of a small minority of their adherents, has ever failed to develop into a full-fledged religion as will appear from the accounts to be given later on.

## II. PANTHEISM

This term covers a vast number of beliefs especially to-day, the common point in all of which is that God is immanent but not transcendent. Thus to put the matter simply, if we could suppose that the entire universe was wiped out, then under Pantheism so would also be the pantheistic deity, whereas under Theism God would remain,

since, as we are taught, He *was* before the universe was created. The same is true of the God of Deism. There are some writers who maintain and with much reason that Pantheism is far more a philosophy than it is a religion. Without entering into a discussion on that point here, Pantheism will be treated of in these pages as a form of religion for it undoubtedly is that to millions who do not curiously distinguish between a religion and a philosophy.

### III. DEISM

God is transcendent and immanent though only vaguely so. He made this world and the universe but is indifferent to its welfare and that of its inhabitants. The eighteenth century Deists with their God of nature may be thought of here as well as those persons who content themselves with speaking of a "Great Unknowable" or of "The Power behind Nature" as the First Principle. With these this book is in no way concerned, but there are quite a number of races whose beliefs fall within this category. A few examples will suffice for the present. (1) The Kols, a tribe in Hindustan, believe in a supreme being, whom they name Sing Bong, who created everything but who is far away and quite unreachable by prayer. As a consequence they do not attempt to worship him, but as they also believe in a number of evil spirits, they offer

worship to these for purposes of propitiation and lest they should do them harm. Here of course is displayed the weakness of this form of religion, for if the Deity is inaccessible and unapproachable it is useless to pray to Him and genuine religion comes to an end, as with the eighteenth century deists, or it degenerates into a cult of minor spirits possibly, in fact frequently, noxious.

(2) Amongst the great mass of Bantu tribes in Africa there is according to Leroy a somewhat similar but more clearly arranged scheme. First of all there is Mu-lungu—a word without a plural—who is unique, inaccessible, Father and Master. Then there are innumerable Pepo or spirits which can be controlled, usually for malignant purposes by mankind and there are Mi-zimu or the shades of the dead. But of neither of these numerous bands is Mu-lungu the head or chief nor have they any chiefs. (3) Amongst the Shilluks again, who are a Nilotic group of Negroes and thus quite distinct from the last, there is a high god called Jwok who is, though creator of mankind, but little if at all interested in it now. This form of belief is a degradation of

#### IV. THEISM

The belief of Christianity in which God is at once transcendent and immanent and—much more—personal and accessible to His creatures whom He sustains and in whom He is interested. Let

us be clear that this view of Deity is by no manner of means peculiar to Christianity though doubtless the more primitive races which hold such a belief do not analyse it with any great subtlety. "Thou, God, who art on high. Behold I am setting out on a journey. Thou God protect me. When I am trading may I make profit. Have mercy on me that I may return safe and sound."

It is perhaps a better prayer than is put up by many a commercial traveller setting forth on his journeyings, yet, as a matter of fact, it is the translation of a prayer offered by an unchristianised pagan native of Central Africa. And that the belief of these Pagans is deep and sincere may be learnt from the following story told to the International Congress for the History of Religions by Bishop Le Roy who has spent most of his life in Central Africa.

"One day at Bagamoyo, I was present at the departure of a European, who was going to buy ivory. The caravan composed of Nyamwezis was ready to start. The head carrier exclaimed, 'God be propitious to us!' 'God!' said the European. 'We don't need *Him*. My money and my gun are God enough for *me*!' The carriers looked at one another, laid down their burdens and began to withdraw. The European begged me to intercede. 'No,' answered these simple folk, 'this white man is bad; did you not hear him

insult God? With him only misfortune could happen to us.' And they all left him."

Such is one classification of religions but it must be supplemented by remembering that there are Monotheistic and Polytheistic groups. The former are familiar to us in the forms of the Christian, Jewish and Mahommedan forms of belief and the latter as the Pantheons of Greece and Rome in classical days.

There has been much discussion as to the origin of the belief in God a matter which will be dealt with in the next chapter and also as to whether polytheism or monotheism is the more ancient form. That too is a question which requires and will receive further treatment but for the moment it may be said that whilst it was at one time thought that polytheism came first the other view is now more commonly held as Swanton maintained in a recent Presidential Address to the anthropologists of the United States. Neither this nor any other anthropological question can be settled by a general discussion as to what might, could or should have been the case, as sometimes seems to have been considered a sufficient approach to a solution. There is only one way to solve these questions, so far as they are capable of solution, and that is by the historical approach.

What exactly do those races which are most primitive testify to? What, if any, deductions



can we draw from what early man, the predecessors of all races has left behind him; he who lived before history was? When we come to examine this matter we shall find that it is not quite so simple as might be imagined and since some idea of its difficulties is essential to a clear consideration of various later problems it will be necessary in the next chapter to set out the general lines of the situation.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIMITIVE FOLK AND THEIR IDEAS OF GOD

**STUDY** the primitive races; excellent advice, but which are the primitive races? In one sense there are no such things as primitive races since every race everywhere has many, many generations of history behind it, comparatively uneventful though those generations may have been.

We may say, with pride in our own civilisation, that there are races which are unprogressive—as we call it—races, that is, who have apparently lagged behind in the race of life at any rate have not attained our extraordinary form of culture with its multifarious mechanical adjuncts.

The latter is perfectly true but whether our grade or the other is really the higher, in the sense that it is the better, is another question and largely one of one's particular philosophy of life.

I know a little town in the extreme west of Ireland which lives almost entirely on fishing and where the harvest of the sea is unusually abundant. The fishermen when I knew it, went

out on a long turn of work for inshore fishermen; they returned and pocketed a large sum of money—large for them. Did they bank it and go once more to work? Not at all, they stayed at home in quiet enjoyment of their money, smoking and talking until it was gone and then went forth and made some more. On the other hand I have recently been reading a sketch of the life of a monarch of American finance who, after wearing out strings of secretaries and other officials and accumulating many millions of dollars, died at the age of fifty-six without, it would appear, having ever had any kind of enjoyment in life other than that afforded by the bringing off of a successful financial coup.

Which is the higher type? That is a question for each person to answer in accordance with his own inclinations. What is clear is that there may be a good deal of loose talk as to progress and planes of culture.

Still it is of course clear that there are races which have, it may be surmised fairly safely, changed less than others; at one time this position was accorded to the aboriginal Australian tribes. That is an idea which can no longer be entertained for it is tolerably clear that others, e.g. the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, have a better claim to such a position. As to the views of a number of these peoples more will shortly be said, but first of all it may be well to

deal briefly with certain pitfalls which are to be met with in investigations of this kind, since they are, when not avoided, likely seriously to invalidate the arguments based upon the supposed facts.

How is one to get at the views of these primitive peoples? It is not apparently an easy job, for the savage is apt to be distrustful and moreover very jealously guards his secrets many of which, let us remind ourselves, have been confided to him under the most solemn pledges of secrecy. Then again he is not a psychologist and is often quite incapable of deciding, still more of expressing clearly what is in his mind. Further for one reason or another he often deliberately deceives. An eminent explorer, fully acquainted with the Eskimo and their language, once told me that he asked a man of that race with whom he was well acquainted, why he wore an object—not a chip—on his shoulder, and was given the reply that it was to enable his friends who came upon him from behind to recognize him.\* As the rear elevation of one male Eskimo does not greatly differ from that of another the explorer felt no surprise but was enlightened when later on the sister of the man casually remarked that it was his totem and worn as such. Taxed with the deceit, the man replied that he was sick of giving real reasons which were only laughed at, and that it was his habit to tell enquirers something that he thought

they would easily accept. Again it is quite clear that the observer may go away with a perfectly incorrect idea of what is the real state of the case and feel so sure of the conclusion at which he has arrived as never to take the trouble to check his information.

For example in a book on marriage customs, of considerable erudition too, I read that every Catholic priest takes a new name on ordination and that the essence of the marriage ceremony in that religion is the partaking together by the contracting couple of the Eucharist. As a matter of fact the latter statement is ludicrously untrue and the former, also save in so far as members of religious orders are concerned. Neither statement is in any way derogatory to the religion in question nor was either made with that intention. But here are two inaccurate statements about a religion well known at home which might easily have been corrected but were not because the author of them was quite sure he was right and did not feel it necessary to check his knowledge. How much easier to make a mistake respecting the religious beliefs of some remote savage who is talking a foreign tongue and is subject to the limitations mentioned above! Very possibly that is the reason why Spencer and Gillen made the mistake of denying religious notions to the Australians, a mistake which was corrected by Strehlow, who having gone to these people as a

missionary, was naturally better qualified to speak of their religious life.

Another thing against which unfortunately one must be on one's guard is conscious or unconscious *parti pris*.

"Given sufficient bias in favour of a theory, the human mind, primitive or even civilised, by unconsciously picking its facts and by the various other familiar ways of fallacy, can bring itself to believe almost any kind of nonsense"—so very properly remarks Dr. Marett and his statement may be supplemented by one made years before by Sir Alfred Lyall "one effect," he says, "of the accumulation of materials has been to encourage speculative generalisations, because it has provided a repertory, out of which one may make arbitrary selection of examples and precedents to suit any theory." Hence, when one sees a number of instances piled up in support of any proposition, it is just as well to make sure that there are not as many more which might be brought in evidence against it. When also a certain view becomes a dogma with a writer or a school, everything has to be subordinated to it. An example will show what is meant by that statement. There is a school of ethnologists which maintains that it is psychologically impossible for any important feature of culture, a belief, a custom, an art ever to be independently reinvented. Hence when one finds a certain cus-

tom in Timbuctoo and another in Alaska, whatever the difficulty of explanation may be, one must have been derived from the other. For example there is a curious kind of pan-pipe in which each stopped pipe is coupled with another which is open, and thus, when blown, gives the octave to the closed. It is found in the Solomon Islands and otherwise only in Peru and Bolivia. The diffusionist school would roundly declare that one must have learnt the trick from the other, however unlikely it seems, because such a thing could not have been invented in the two places independently. Most ethnologists certainly agree that diffusion is a constant and a basic process and it has been claimed that the reinventions are to the copyings as one to ten. But on the other hand it is very clear that the theory is not proved, and, until—if ever—it is, it is obvious that to use it as it is used by some is merely to beg the question. At any rate we should never assume that the reinvention has taken place until it has been clearly proved that borrowing is quite out of the question. Perhaps another example of the same kind of use of a dogma is to be found in the evolutionary method once so popular. When a great theory like that popularised by Darwin comes into vogue, there is a natural tendency to adapt it to lines other than those for which it was devised. Thus it was attempted to apply it to ethnology somewhat on these lines: first it

is assumed that all peoples necessarily pass through the same stages and that their passage is gradual and not cataclysmic, and is from less to more perfect adjustments. And thus having arranged a gentle ascent in connection with any given point of culture—say marriage—it only remained to go out into the wide field of examples mentioned by Lyall and cull exactly what would fit in with the scheme, eliminating anything that refused to accommodate itself. Used uncritically, as it often has been, it is possible by this method to prove almost any theory. Of course the method of collection and comparison carefully employed is of great value but, it must be admitted that in the past there have been writers of the school of Fluellen who assimilate Monmouth to Macedon because each has a river and “there is salmons in both.” The really fruitful method of discussing the kind of questions with which ethnology is concerned is the historical which commences by a careful collection of all facts and their classification especially with a view to exhibiting the gaps in our knowledge. It does not, as the other method would, make any attempt to bridge these gaps or to offer general views though where sufficient facts exist a general conclusion may at least tentatively be suggested.

These general remarks, intended as a kind of preface to much which is to follow will enable the reader for whom this book is intended, to



## PRIMITIVE IDEAS OF GOD

form an idea when he is on safe ground and when he is on a too slippery slope of theory. And so we may pass to a consideration of some of these races whom, for want of a better word, we must call primitive and their ideas as to deity.

The inhabitants of the Andaman Islands are, it is pretty generally admitted, as good an example of a primitive people as can be found. They are dwarfish and practically nude and were for a time believed to be a people destitute of any idea of God. The careful investigations, however, of Mr. Man,<sup>1</sup> who lived for many years amongst them, have dispelled that notion and we know that they worship a Supreme Being whom they name Puluga, who was never born and is immortal; who is invisible yet like fire; is omniscient, knowing the secrets of all hearts; who created all things except evil; and who is angered by sins which He will punish in another world. Such sins are lying, stealing, murder and adultery and in connection with this last, Mr. Man tells us that these "naked savages" have a very high standard of modesty and that sexual crimes are unknown.

The Australian natives are low in the scale of culture and there was a doubt about their religious views, if any, at one time, but, though there are a number of tribes in that vast area with differing ideas, in a general way it may be said

<sup>1</sup> Disputed of late, but, in my opinion, still holding the field.

that these peoples believe in a Supreme Being who, in some cases we are told, made man of mud; who was once on earth but now is in the skies; who is legislator, guardian and who rewards and punishes, being however benevolent and clement. There are amongst them three unpardonable sins:—murder; lying to the leaders of the tribe; and sexual relations within forbidden degrees. Turning to Africa and its many races we may select two of the lowest in the scale, the despised Bushmen and the Pygmies.

The former, since the disappearance of the so-called Strandloopers, seem to be the lowest race in Africa and, condemned even by the Hottentots, have been driven largely into the Kalahari Desert. Their remarkable cave drawings, however, resembling those of the caves of Spain and Southern France, show them to be possessed of higher artistic capacity than some of those who despise and chase them. They believe in a Supreme Being whom they call Kagè who is the creator of all things and to whom they address personal prayers.

“Oh, Kagè! are we not your children? Do not you see that we hunger? Give us to eat.”

The Akka Pygmies, certainly one of the most primitive of races who inhabit the central forests of Africa are, according to Bishop Le Roy, who has passed his life in that part of the world, possessed of a clearer and less tainted idea of a

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Supreme Being than many of the races of the African Continent who are generally regarded as more civilised.

In the American continent the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego are perhaps as low in the scale of culture as any people, yet they too believe in a Supreme Being and that He has regard to the moral conduct of those on earth. The Aymará, further to the north in the same southern part of the continent, have a monotheistic faith with which is connected a tradition which may be recited for reasons which will shortly appear. Man was made by God because He was alone and wanted someone to love Him. This first man, Kuru, had a son who died and was buried. God said to Kuru:—"Thy son shall rise again from the dead; eat not therefore of the fruit which grows from his grave. Kuru disobeyed this command and in consequence God said to him: "Because you have not obeyed me, you shall toil and you shall die; and all men shall die with you." A last instance from Asia in the shape of the Santals, a wild people of the jungles and hills of Northern India. They at any rate are as low as one can get in the scale of culture and do not even possess an alphabet. Their tradition is that, in the early days, their ancestors did in fact worship a Creator of all things. But these first parents of theirs were induced by an evil spirit to drink an intoxicating fluid made from the fruit

of some tree. They thus came under the influence of the evil spirit whom, and not the Creator, they have worshipped ever since. Many other instances might be selected of the belief in a Supreme Being often, as we have yet to see, overlaid heavily with incrustations of all kinds of magic and other corruptions. The instances chosen have been selected first because they come from the lowest rungs of the ladder of culture and secondly because they lead up to another question, related to that of diffusion, which must leap to the mind of anybody reading the last page or two. "Surely, these peoples or some of them, must have got hold of the Biblical account and in a distorted fashion? Otherwise how about the making of man out of mud, the primeval curse, the forbidden fruit juice and so on?" That in fact is a solution of the question as to how these peoples came to have these beliefs which has not once but many times been offered. Yet it seems clear that, however possible it may have been in some instances, in others there is no sort of proof that anything of the kind is probable perhaps even possible. Take the last instance—the Santals live in deep jungles; are most averse to mingling with any other peoples and though the story looks like the Biblical one there is no particle of evidence available of missionary influence on them.

The Australians were also said to have ac-

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quired their ideas from missionaries yet Father Schmidt, a very leading ethnologist, and one who has made a very special study of these peoples, is quite clear that the missionary idea has no evidence whatever to support it. The first missionaries to the aboriginal Amerindians were the Jesuit Fathers and it is clear from their records that they found peoples believing in a Supreme Being and that it was not, therefore, as has been alleged, from their teaching that this idea was placed in the minds of the red men.

The next question which arises is the way in which the idea came into the possession of these and other peoples and that very difficult and disputable point must be now discussed.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

MR. CASAUBON in George Eliot's novel was busy with a work which was to be the key to all mythologies when death removed him, and his Dorothea never issued the book, if indeed it was ever completed. But plenty of other Casaubons have laid their views before the public, some of which will have to be discussed in these pages. The multiplicity and variety of these theories as to the primitive origin of religious ideas show the accuracy of Dr. Lowie's statement that it is quite premature to set out world embracing schemes to account for the great variety of religious faiths, until a far larger accumulation of facts has been made. Meantime, with what there are to hand, evidence has been found that magic was the beginning of all things; that it was belief in spirits; that it was the outcome of social relations; that it sprang from totems and blood sacrifices; that it rose from adoration of the sun.

All of these have had and some of them still have their strenuous supporters and doubtless there will be other theories before man tires of

theorising over this matter. Meantime it is clear at the outset that there are two very definite lines of thought according to whether we consider religion as a thing natural or revealed. The former view is that with which we are mainly concerned here but the latter must not be passed over without reference. That there was a direct intervention of the Deity or a revelation is unquestionably at the bottom of the beliefs of most races, though at present the idea that such was the origin of religion is most unpopular amongst most writers on the subject.

Even Andrew Lang is careful to tell us that *in limine* he disclaims the theory of a supernatural revelation to the earliest men. Reinach speaks of the hypothesis as "gratuitous and puerile," and, with all respect to that writer, therein shows an absolute lack of philosophical appreciation of the position. A puerile statement is one which could only commend itself to one of childish intellect and must at once be rejected by any one with ordinary reasoning powers. That is not the position of the hypothesis of a primitive revelation. Either there is a God or there is not. If there is not *cadit quæstio*. But the non-existence of God is not a proposition which any reasonable person will attempt to prove nor can prove. *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus!* If there is a God and the Theistic view is correct it is quite certain that He could make a Revelation

and, if as that theory teaches, He has a care for his children, it is even *a priori* probable that He should make one. Jevons sums the matter up quite accurately when he says "We cannot maintain it to be impossible or even improbable that such revelation may have been made to primitive man." In fact to dismiss this possibility as a childish notion is to act quite irrationally, for science can neither prove nor disprove it. Let us note the prevalence of the belief in a primitive revelation and pass on to the other line of investigation.

Looking at the question of the Origin of religion from the natural point of view let us remember what are the characteristics of the savage mind again summarised by Jevons in his well-known book. He is not a person ready to swallow any story, indeed incredulity is much more his character. Nor is he incapable of reasoning and, as the writer just quoted says, on such points as the uniformity of nature; the theory of causality; the principle of induction he would find no difficulty in agreeing with all that is in Mill's Logic. Of course he is likely to work, from imperfect information, from false premises and to come to incorrect conclusions in consequence and again his atmosphere is different from ours and that has its marked consequences. Someone has pointed out that the Arabian Nights naturally arose and could only arise in a land and time when



everybody really did believe in genii and the like and felt no difficulty in crediting stories into which they came. The savage similarly lives and moves in an atmosphere of magic and is similarly affected by it. Just as one must try to get into the atmosphere of a certain historical period in order to understand what happened, so we must try to realize the savage position if we would understand what he is thinking about and how he is thinking about it.

Again we must discard the idea, drawn from Darwinian theories, that we must begin with the simple and work up to the complicated and that sociological facts can be arranged on neat ladders as it was once supposed that animal genealogies could be. The original Darwinian hypothesis began with what was called—with singular inadequacy—the simple cell. In the process of evolution it became more and more complicated and multiplied, until finally we arrive at the picture of nature as we see it. That idea, as everybody knows, swept the educated world and for a time everything was to be fitted into it. Of course the modern Mendelian idea is the antipodes of this but that is not matter for discussion here. What emerges is that the application of this method to ethnology was quite inaccurate and has led to quite impossible conclusions.

In accordance with this method we have had the theories of Lubbock and Tyler. The former

commencing with a primitive atheism proceeded through stages of fetishism; totemism or the cult of nature; anthropomorphism or idolatry; to a creative deity, the author of morals. The latter also commenced with a period of primitive atheism and supposed that man emerged from that period first of all by coming to an idea of something apart from the body—the spirit—through dreams, ecstasies, the phenomena of death. Then he concluded that since he was inhabited by a spirit so were all other things, even those apparently inanimate. From this he argued himself respectively into ancestor worship, fetishism, idolatry and the cult of nature and thus eventually arrived at polytheism, pantheism, monotheism. Without discussing these different topics which will receive attention elsewhere it may at once be said that these schemes resemble the celebrated picture of the camel which the philosopher evolved from his inner consciousness. It possessed every merit but one—namely, that it did not resemble in any way any known camel. There is only one way of approaching these questions and that is the historical method American ethnologists have been pressing in recent works. Let us see what really happened historically and apply that test to theories of this kind. When we do that we find this initial flaw. There is no such thing known as an atheistic race. That point has been already made, but it should be remembered

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that in the days that Lubbock wrote there was a definite belief to the contrary. How frail the evidence was on which it existed will be gathered from the fact that Lubbock quotes a certain Mr. Jukes as evidence that the inhabitants of the Dalmryple Isles were atheists, without adverting to the fact that his informant admits having spent but one day on those islands. The primitive races, to whom we must go for information since they are the best evidence to-day, so far from displaying traces of atheism, rather seem to show us a full-fledged monotheism, overlaid it is true, with all kinds of incrustations, but still obvious beneath them. That seems to endorse Swanton's view that monotheism was the primitive condition and if that be so these evolutionary schemes completely break down. Again we may note that pre-historic man, so far as we can come to any conclusion about that individual, was not without religion, a fact admitted even by Reinach.

There is another argument of importance and it is this. An effect cannot rise above its cause. Now whether a man believes in religion himself or not, no person conversant with history will doubt the tremendous influence which it has and always has had, nationally and personally. That is a fact which requires explanation and does not seem to receive it from these theories of an evolutionary type.

Here also perhaps another difficulty may be

considered that of the trickster and immoral deity with whom all students are familiar in the shape of Jupiter, Zeus and many another. By some this is held to be a stage in the direction of the attainment of the idea of a single, pure and holy Being. Is that really credible? Mr. Lang's criticism of this idea seems to dispose of it entirely. He asks us to conceive that Zeus was *originally* not a Father and guardian, but the lewd and trick ghost of a medicine-man, a dancer of indecent dances, a wooer of other men's wives, a shape shifter or, as in the case of some savage deities, a burlesque droll or a mere jocular bugbear. And he asks by what means such a character came to be accredited later with the loftiest attributes, and how he could be the originator of the tribal ethics, which in practice, he daily broke and despised. "Students," he continues; "who argue for the possible priority of the lowest, or, as I call them, mythical attributes of the Being, must advance an hypothesis of the concretion of the nobler elements around the original wanton and mischievous ghost." At this particular point it is not desirable to discuss how the Being, *ex hypothesi* pure in the beginning, became so corrupted—that must be left until the question of myth is considered. What is desired here is to press the point that on the sound principle of the effect not rising above its cause the emergence of the higher from the lower is not a likely thing to

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occur. Of course the true explanation of the facts just alluded to and of other things yet to be dealt with lies in that fatal tendency in the minds of men which leads to degeneration in religion, the sort of thing which led Norman stone-carvers and later wood-carvers to insert indecent representations in sacred edifices.

Before considering those topics there are some other ideas as to the origination of religion which have been suggested and ought not to be passed over without consideration.

The idea of *Mana* is certainly the most important of these and has been made much use of by Dr. Marett in his "Threshold of Religion." Others such as Hubert, Mauss and Van Gennep had previously suggested the same solution. The term just used comes from the Pacific, though the idea is met with in many other places, the *wakan* of the Sioux being the same conception. It is not very easy to define but probably Bishop Codrington, who knew Melanesia well, gives the clearest idea of what is meant by it. He says that it is "a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control." Though it is not physical it may show itself in physical ways and it is supernatural to the extent that it is "what works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary

power of men, outside the common processes of nature."

Thus Marett conceives that it has "the positive emotional value which is the raw material of religion" and that the origin of not only religion but of magic is to be sought in it. In fact Hartland speaks of it as theoplasma—the stuff that gods are made of. The idea is certainly part of the general notion of the supernatural as alluded to in Chapter I. and doubtless the feeling is there and is important. That it is the sole origin of religion is, however, very disputable. Schmidt, whilst accepting the fact, does not think that it is sufficient to account for all that it is supposed to effect. The spiritual life of the primitive man, a true man, is not to be regarded as confined within the limits of a vague astonishment and an ill-defined fear. In addition to this he has the clear light from the notion of universal ideas and of the knowledge of causation, which two things are quite sufficient to bring him to a true sense of religion and to the recognition of a Supreme Being. Malinowski, who has a first-hand knowledge of the Pacific ideas, and is sane and cautious in his judgments, warns us against attaching too much importance to this idea and says that "the theory of *Mana* as the essence of primitive magic and religion has been so brilliantly advocated and so recklessly handled that it must be realized first that our knowledge of the *mana* notably in Mel-

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nesia, is somewhat contradictory, and especially that we have hardly any data at all showing just how this conception enters into religion or magical cult and belief."

The relation of religion to Social Life is the next point to which attention must be directed. Robertson Smith long ago claimed that primitive religion was the special interest of the community, more than it was that of the individual, and this thesis has been taken up and very strongly supported by Durkheim. His argument is to the effect that religion is always founded on a church, the general assembly of the people for religious worship, for of course amongst primitive races the idea of dissent has no footing. This social group or clan is, he asserts, the god of the clan, under the disguise of its totem whether animal or vegetable. When we arrive at the study of totemism we shall learn how strong a hold that has taken upon the imagination of some ethnologists and Durkheim is one of those who believe in it as the primitive form of religion. Without opening up arguments yet to be dealt with, it may be said that that view is not regarded as tenable to-day by the greater number of ethnologists and of course there are various objections to the theory. One of these must at once occur to any one who thinks about it and that is the general prevalence of what are certainly highly individualistic exhibitions of religious worship. There are the soli-

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taries of India as there were thousands of solitaries in the lauras of Egypt in the early days of Christianity, and as there were anchorites in England and elsewhere in pre-reformation days, and as there are to-day in the shape of Carthusians and Camaldolese. Dr. Malinowski sums up the reasons why this theory cannot be accepted as follows: "First of all, in primitive societies religion arises to a great extent from purely individual sources. Secondly, society as a crowd is by no means always given to the production of religious beliefs or even to religious states of mind, which collective effervescence is often of an entirely secular nature. Thirdly, tradition, the sum total of certain rules and cultural achievements, embraces, and in primitive societies keeps in a tight grip, both profane and sacred. Finally the personification of society, the conception of a 'Collective Soul,' is without foundation in fact, and is against the sound methods of social science." Perhaps it may be remarked in concluding this section, that, as Lowie points out, Durkheim, like Frazer, has been far too much influenced by the Australian evidence. When the customs of these peoples were carefully studied and the results laid before the public with the strong impression which then prevailed, but does not now, that we were dealing with the most primitive races known or likely to be known, it was but natural that the facts, as then first made known,



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should exercise what we now see to have been an undue influence on the minds even of scientific workers.

Perhaps the most extraordinary perversion of theory is that which attributes the origin of religion to "misunderstood erotic emotion" as Lowie puts it. Apparently this theory is advanced on the ground that it is at or about adolescence that it often happens that genuine religious feelings are first awakened. That, however, is about the time that young people usually begin to think with any intelligence and it is a mere coincidence that it is also the time when sexual influences are likely to become effective. Asceticism, however, so prominent in such a number and variety of religions is alone a contradiction to this idea and we may entirely agree with Lowie that few conceptions are less instructive than this. The most potent forerunner that Christianity had, as we have yet to see, was the group of Mystery Religions which came in from the East. In all of these, at least in the inception of each, asceticism was strongly marked, so much so that Seneca abandoned the practice of vegetarianism solely with the object of giving no colour to the taunt that he belonged to a foreign religion. After discussing these various theories which attempt to account for the origin of religion, and postponing for the present certain others which will be dealt with in their proper places, we may turn to what

after all is perhaps the simplest and most natural solution, apart from that of a primitive revelation which it neither supports nor opposes. Man, by the use of his reason, brought himself to the knowledge of the existence of God. It is quite clear that whenever and wherever we meet with him man has always been man and what is more, as will be shown in a later chapter, has entertained a belief in a future life. His mental operations are conducted on identical lines wherever we meet him and he reasons along lines familiar to all of us. This explanation is that adopted by Fr. Schmidt, the well-known ethnologist, in his book *Sur l'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu* in which he says that man wherever we know him has been unanimous in forming universal ideas, in condensing a multitude of things into groups, and in bringing all these groups together in the idea of a complete universe. Then he has sought for an author not only of each of these things but also of the universe and applying the doctrine of causality with which he has always been acquainted, he has arrived at a knowledge of that Author by a rational judgment.

Bishop Le Roy, previously quoted, takes a similar view. "Whatever be the explanations furnished as to the origin of religions, they all come to one of these answers: that these primary elements, observed in humanity prior to all history, either have been revealed to it by a supernatural

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revelation or intervention or are the spontaneous product of the human spirit which, as it is everywhere the same, has everywhere formed the same religious conceptions. Or else, admitting these two natural and supernatural forces, we make them cooperative so that, far from excluding each other, they wonderfully unite in a necessary accord: the human spirit acting in the fulness of the faculties that have been given it, and divine Providence enlightening, fortifying, sustaining, and directing it in the course of the ages, directly or indirectly, despite all the sources of trouble, error and perversion that surround it." Naturally, as he points out, there will be those, like Reinach, whose views compel them to adopt the second path only since they start with the preconception that materialism is the true philosophy of existence. Those who do not adopt this attitude, are not, therefore, compelled to adopt any one of the three hypotheses just mentioned. Far from what is generally supposed, they need not even take into account proof in favour of it. Of course, if they believe in the Bible they will find it there. But the Church to which both Fr. Schmidt and Bishop Le Roy belong, generally supposed to be more strict than any other in its dogmas, lays upon those belonging to it this one obligation of belief, namely that they must not restrict the power of human reason in the conquest of truth by placing certitude *solely* in the revealed word of God, for

that under the name of Fideism has been absolutely condemned. On the contrary it is held that it is quite possible for a man who has never heard of the Bible, nor received any revelation nor account of one, to arrive at the knowledge of the existence of a God.

Let this chapter conclude with a quotation from that distinguished American anthropologist Dr. D. G. Brinton, showing how the facts which were before him as they are before us and to a large extent as they were before Tyler appealed to him and the explanation which he drew from them. "This universal postulate, the psychic origin of all religious thought, is the recognition or, if you please, the assumption, that conscious volition is the ultimate source of all force. It is the belief that behind the sensuous, phenomenal world, distinct from it, giving it form, existence, and activity, lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind, of conscious Will, of Intelligence, analogous in some way to our own; and—mark this essential corollary—that man is in communication with it." That in other words is the argument from design carried to the point of recognition that it is the Designer's will and intelligence that are recognized.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELIGION—MORALS—LAW

WE have seen that there is a general sense amongst men that their relations with the higher power or powers are not as they should be; that things are somehow out of joint. This is an idea that strongly reminds us of Christian teaching with regard to original sin. But beyond this general feeling there are specific offences which have to be taken into serious consideration and with regard to these we must distinguish between two classes.

There are those offences which are commonly said to be against the Law of God and, though it may be said that the question is being begged by using that phrase, I stick to it because it does convey to the reader, whether he believes them to be the ordinances of God or not, what is meant just as "the act of God" in an insurance policy conveys a meaning recognized in law. What is meant will become clearer if we consider the second class, namely the man-made offences. Take, for example, the law against alcoholic stimulants. No one but a fanatic or a Manichean will claim

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that there is any intrinsic sin in drinking a glass of beer or even of whiskey and water. It is an offence against the law because a sufficient majority of persons possessed of legislative powers have so constituted it, but it is not an offence against the moral law as ordinarily understood. In fact it is obvious that man-made laws may demand resistance as when a State sets itself up to refuse the liberty that a man should possess to worship his God according to the beliefs that he holds sacred. All these kind of provisions may be left out of consideration here, for they belong with tabus and will be referred to again under that heading. Let us turn to the other group, by far the more important, seeing that man-made ordinances may at any time be unmade by the successors of those who made them. There is a sense of sin in the minds of mankind; what is it and where did it come from? And why has man alone any such idea as that of sin? These are the really important questions. Professor Angus, dealing with the Mystery Religions and the rising tide of a sense of sin which came before them, speaks of "the brooding consciousness of failure, of the futility of human effort, of the load of human sin, the ineluctability of penalty of gods estranged and the need of reconciliation and purification," and he proceeds to quote from another author: "The Greco-Roman world had reached a point from which Judaism had started.

From generation to generation rose a louder wail over the frailty of human nature, the weakness of mortals, the natural sinfulness of man who can in no way please the gods, and on whom, therefore, the anger of the gods weighs heavy. The complaint raised by Hebrew conscience in the dawn of history becomes the evening invocation of Hellenic philosophy." Let us look at that for a moment. Plato thought that all sin consisted in ignorance, for he could not bring himself to believe that man, if he once saw what virtue was, could fail to follow its path. Aristotle, closer to fact, taught that men might be voluntarily wicked. *Video, meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*: it is common knowledge that Aristotle was in the right.

Plato condemns the doctrine that man should be honest because it pays, and this was ages before the old English proverb that honesty is the best policy, but he who is honest on that account is not an honest man. He went beyond this for he thought it even more monstrous that man should be honest on account of possible future rewards and penalties. Therein he reflects the light of his own noble character. Perhaps one may take a later example in the case of Huxley. Writing to Charles Kingsley after the death and burial of his son, Huxley says that when he heard the minister read out as part of the Burial Service the words, "If the dead rise not again let us eat

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and drink for to-morrow we die," could hardly restrain his indignation against what he thought to be a blasphemy against human nature. Actually if he had looked on human nature as it was and is he would have seen how wrong he was. But that was an age when Herbert Spencer was telling the world that man's future perfection was as certain even as death. We do not think that now, when philosophers are wondering whether even civilisation is going to be left to us.

Carnoy tells us that the general moral code of the Indo-European race before it broke up shows that they were taught not to lie; not to commit any act bordering on impurity; to respect their parents; to pay the necessary duties to their dead ancestors and towards the gods. Thus early in the history of our race was there a fairly comprehensive scheme of morals and a corresponding catalogue of sins.

In a preceding chapter we saw what were the moral regulations of races as low in the scale of civilisation as the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands and the aboriginal Australians and may have noticed that, as in the case cited above, sexual morality holds an important place, a fact which may be docketed for future notice.

For the promulgation of these laws of morality everywhere it is believed that they were given by revelation from the Creator of the race. As Mainage puts it: "God is not only the creator:



he watches over and rewards or punishes the acts of men and that is why in the immense majority of cases, ethical laws are formally referred to the Supreme "Being." The beginnings of Hindu law, as Maine points out, were as priests and law begins as "conduct" intimately affected throughout by the belief as to the lot which awaits human beings after death.

That the Hindu belief was in Metempsychosis does not matter a jot, for the principle of punishment or reward enters in there though its method may vary greatly from that which is taught by Christianity. Go where you will and you find the same idea. Mr. Cameron, who so carefully investigated the blackfellows of Australia, narrates a conversation which he had with one of them named Makogo, a member of the Wathi Wathi tribe, who told him that before they came in contact with white men at all they believed in a future state of rewards or punishment and that in his opinion they would have been better off if their beliefs had never been disturbed. This at least proves that the ideas in question were not, as some have urged, derived from missionary teaching. In fact such ideas are far too widespread to permit of that explanation being entertained. Or again take the evidence of Dr. Livingstone, who knew his Africans, (and his evidence is supported by Bishop Le Roy) of a different form of Christianity but equally acquainted

with African primitives. Livingstone said "There is no necessity for beginning to tell even the most degraded of these people of the existence of God, or of a future state, the facts being universally admitted"—and he continues: "Intelligent men among the Bakwains have scouted the idea of any of them having been without a tolerably clear conception of good and evil, God and the future state. Nothing we indicate as sin ever appeared to them as otherwise" except, he adds, polygamy.

We may consider that the matter requires no further labouring. There is a wide-spread sense of sin; there is a group of sins, such as we should call sins against God, which is fairly universal; there is the equally universal idea that as a man lives so shall he fare in the future life, in which, as we have yet to see, there is a belief universal in time and in extent. Where did all these ideas come from? That is a question of the first importance. Herbert Spencer asked that question but gave no clue to an answer "The watcher of conduct, the friendly, creative being of low savage faith, whence was he evolved? The circumstance of his existence, as far as I can see; the chastity, the unselfishness, the pitifulness, the loyalty to plighted word, the prohibition of even extra-tribal homicide, enjoined in various places on his worshippers, are problems that appear somehow to have escaped Mr. Spencer's notice" says

Andrew Lang, adding that "I do not pretend to know how the lowest savages' evolved the theory of a God who reads the heart and 'makes for righteousness.'"

There is one thing quite clear: the idea of morality is in no way derived from an observation of nature. We have been advised to go to the ant for lessons in diligence but no one has ever suggested that the animal kingdom presents suitable examples in the matter of sexual morality. Yet it is just in that direction that we are told that primitive races, even the Andamanese, have a very high code. Where did they get it? They say themselves from their Divine Being, just as others say. The aborigines of Australia have a very remarkable system of marriage regulations whereby what we should call "forbidden degrees" are set up and those degrees do not much differ from those which we are accustomed to. Where, and how did they arrive at the conclusion that marriages between brothers and sisters, for example, should not be permitted and that unions between parents and children were so disgraceful that they should be punished by death? Certainly not from nature.

Sir James Fraser at the end of his great work on Totemism and Exogamy, a marvellous collection of facts in connection with these marriage customs, asks this very question and his reply shows the absolute bankruptcy of ethnology in

respect of an explanation of these customs. Of course he says, and doubtless truly, these people could not have either exact information on eugenic matters nor are they likely to have drawn up their regulations with any far-reaching ideas as to their posterity. And then he proceeds in poetical fashion to assume that the theory on which they worked—of which we know nothing—must have been “egregiously wrong” but “they appear to have been fundamentally right in practice. What they abhorred was really evil; what they preferred was really good. Perhaps we may call their curious system an unconscious mockery of science. The end which it accomplished was wise, though the thoughts of the men who invented it were foolish. In acting as they did, these poor savages blindly followed the impulse of the great evolutionary forces of existence”—which, by the way, is precisely what they did not do—“which, in the physical world are constantly educating higher out of lower forms of existence and in the moral world civilization out of savagery. If that be so totemism has been an instrument in the hands of that unknown power, the masked wizard of history, who by some mysterious process, some subtle alchemy, so often transmutes in the crucible of suffering the dross of folly and evil into the fine gold of wisdom and good.” The Australian would tell the writer of those lines that God taught him these plans. And, if the words just

quoted have any meaning at all, that is what *they* mean. Then why not say so plainly? It most assuredly cannot be shown that the knowledge was not received in that way unless you can show that there is no such thing as a personal God. That being an impossible demonstration it is certainly not unscientific to entertain such an explanation. For it *is* an explanation and so far we have no other.

## CHAPTER V

### OFFERINGS—SACRIFICES—COMMUNIONS

SUPPOSE you were lost in the course of a long walk in the country; no trace of an inn where food is to be obtained; yet an urgent necessity for food and drink. At last you come to a house, where, however, no one is to be found, though food and drink in plenty. The starving wayfarer would certainly eat and drink and, if he had any feelings of decency would, when leaving, place on the table such a sum of money as in his opinion would defray the cost of his entertainment or at least serve as an indication of his recognition of the prior rights of the owner which he had invaded. It is interesting to note how readily this notion of a return for a favour to an unknown donor can rise to the mind. Stevenson in his "Travels With a Donkey in the Cevennes," tells us that after a night spent amidst pine trees in the open, he felt "that he had been most hospitably received in (his) green caravanserai." "I felt that I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I

went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging."

Thus may be pictured the ideas of primitive man with regard to this world, as they are drawn out by Le Roy. Man finds himself in a world where he is a stranger. In this world he sees all sorts of useful things which would help him to live and which he would like to use, nay must use if he is to exist. But they are not his and he feels afraid lest by taking them he may offend the real owner who, though invisible to him, may yet be watching from some coign of vantage, or perhaps close by him, though not to be seen by human eyes. Hence he takes because he must, yet he ceremoniously leaves some of the things which he has taken as an offering to the real owner.

The Maori makes or used to make an offering of the first grass which he cut when getting in his hay. These first blades were not included in the hay harvest but thrown aside, the offering to the real owner; the first-fruits of which we often hear in other connections. The libation of wine poured out to the gods, the drinker not emptying the glass—all these are offerings and are offered for the same reasons. But we may go beyond that.

The pygmies of the Central African forests, have, as we have seen, a very clear idea of a Supreme Being, the Lord of all things, from whom they have received the earth on which they live. Every year they gather from the top of a Nkula

tree the highest nut which grows upon it and burn it on a fire made of green wood with prayers and dances. That is something more than an offering for what is offered is destroyed so that no one else can make any use of it and thus we arrive at the idea of a sacrifice. That calls for careful consideration being, as Jevons calls it, the central feature of all religion when combined with what it leads to, namely communion. When a sacrifice is made, the maker gives up something which he values more or less—sometimes very much indeed—to the Deity he worships. He does not merely set it aside so that some one else can come and take it, but destroys it, thus confining its usefulness to the invisible being to whom it is consecrated. So far the sacrifices dealt with fall into the first two of the three categories set down by Fowler in his account of Roman religious beliefs. First, there are those which he calls honorific, a mere offering—a gift to the deity. Secondly there is the completely destroyed victim, a piacular or sin-offering. Finally there is the sacramental sacrifice where the sacrificer enters into communion with his deity by partaking of the thing sacrificed. At one time there was an idea that the object of the sacrifice was the actual nourishment of the deity to whom the sacrifice was offered: that, however, is now an abandoned hypothesis and one which Jevons calls a “fundamentally erroneous conception” for he sees clearly that the “mere gift”



theory is inadequate and that the offering is primarily to secure terms of mutual friendship between giver and receiver, terms which may be later cemented into closer union by sacramental communion. The sacrifice, as we have just seen, may be purely vegetable in its character, but it is much more frequently animal in accordance with the idea prevalent at all times and in all parts of the world that without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins. Thus in all manner of places we find the victim—whether animal or human—slain and his blood dashed over the altar. “Whatever else was done in connection with a sacrifice,” says Robertson Smith in his “Religion of the Semites,” the primitive rite of sprinkling or dashing the blood against the altar, or allowing it to flow down on the ground at its base, was hardly ever omitted; and this practice was not peculiar to the Semites, but was equally the rule with the Greeks and Romans, and indeed with the ancient nations generally.” The most extensive example perhaps was that of the *Taurobolium*, a disgusting ceremony which came into Italy with the worship of the Magna Mater and was perhaps incorporated into that of Mithras at a later date. The bull to be sacrificed was led up on to a stage with latticed floor beneath which were the persons paying for the ceremony and hoping to benefit from it. The throat of the bull was cut by the priest; the blood poured down

through the interspaces on those below who wallowed in it, rubbing it into their hair and all over their bodies; finally emerging from the ceremony, in their own words—*renatus in æternum*—for ever reborn. There was a minor ceremony of the same kind, the *Criobolium*, where a ram was the victim and these may serve as examples of the more bloody of the animal sacrifices. There were many variations of the human sacrifice idea but in all of them the shedding of blood was the prime factor. - For example the idea of tattooing seems to have been in the first instance that of a sacrificial shedding of blood, the tattoo marks being proof positive that their bearer had paid his debt to his deity.

Then perhaps it came to be thought that, since marks there must be, there was no reason why they should not be decorative instead of merely haphazard scars of bloodletting. So amongst the Fijis and elsewhere it was thought that no untattooed person could enter the happy future life, and the welt tattooing is obviously that which is nearer to the original idea than the decorative and much slighter wounds, though with greater extent of operations, of such peoples as the Igorots of the Philippines, or above all of the Japanese where the decorative idea is carried to its maximum with all the artistic skill of that people. Then there is the custom of knocking out a tooth at the time of puberty, certainly that of cutting off

a finger or fingers especially from the left hand.

Lowie, speaking of the fact that some form of bodily torture or disfigurement is used as an offering says: "Most commonly, perhaps men would hack off a finger joint of the left hand, so that during the period of my visits to the Crows (1907-16) I saw few old men with left hands intact." Such seems to have been the cause of the numbers of prints in Bushmën caves in South Africa and elsewhere of hands wanting one or more fingers. Again it is probable that ear or nose, perhaps lip-rings, began as permanent evidence for sacrificial shedding of blood. A more severe practice was that of tongue wounding favoured by the ancient Mayas as well as by other peoples. There is a Maya glyph, in which a man is seen kneeling before some deity and drawing through an aperture in his tongue a cord in which are fixed, at intervals, sharp thorns; the offering of a blood sacrifice. Human sacrifice was prevalent in many places and is not unknown even to-day in such places as are apart from the dominance of the white man. A curious feature of it is that in its worst manifestations it should be so often related to a relatively high form of civilisation. Most of the Amerindian tribes for example knew nothing of it, in fact their sacrifices were very seldom on a great scale. But the highest civilisations,—the Mayas for example—were shocking in their exhibitions of the kind. Repre-

sentations of the sacrifices show the human victim laid on an altar with a projection to throw his abdomen into a convex curve when placed across it. The slayer then tears open his belly with a stone knife and the heart is torn out and thrown on to the altar. Yet here was a people with mathematical powers of considerable extent if we may judge from what is known of their calendars, who evolved for themselves the idea of a zero and generally were miles ahead of the more northern Amerindian tribes. The same may be said of the Carthaginians whose horrible goddess Tanit, who seems to have been a modification of the Mother Goddess, received innumerable sacrifices of infants. Recent discoveries made by French excavators unearthed in front of an altar near a temple of Tanit three vaults filled with nothing but the bones of children from two to three years of age making a pile in all of fifteen feet high when removed. It is thought that to the left of the altar was a stone slab with a bronze grill under which was a fierce fire. On to this grill were thrown the bodies of first-born children according to ancient rites which continued from the sixth or seventh century B. C. up to the time when the Romans destroyed the splendid city, a centre of a great if terrible civilisation. Or lastly take the Druids of whom we know but little but of whom we know that they were given to human sacrifices, the bodies of the victims to

be burnt being placed in wicker frames. Perhaps these were enclosures in which the sacrificial victims were placed with brush and firewood to consume them. Some think that such outlined figures as the Giant of Cerne Abbas in Dorsetshire and the Long Man of Wilmington in Sussex were such enclosures fenced round with wickerwork when the sacrifices were to take place. If so since these enclosures are respectively 180 and 240 feet in length the number of victims must have been considerable. What we know about the Druids leads one to suppose that they too had a civilisation higher than those which surrounded them. They excited the admiration of the Romans by the extent of their learning whatever the value of that learning may have been. Not to press this matter too far it seems as if there had been a tendency for relatively high civilisations to run into this horrible devil worship, for that is what it is. And as to the voodoo rites, so far as anything is known of them, with which human sacrifices are also associated, where devil worship is the central character, there again it is not amongst the primitives like the Pygmies or other Central Africans that it is met with but amongst much more sophisticated races such as the Dahomeyans were. However, to sum up: sacrifices, especially bloody sacrifices culminating in those of human victims exist the world over and we may now turn to their relation to the third factor—namely

communions. Le Roy tells us that the sacrifice thus offered to the deity and made of no avail to others, is now believed to be penetrated by the supernatural influence or even inhabited by the spirit to whom it was presented. It is then consumed by the offerer of the sacrifice who thus enters into communion with the spirit he is worshipping and with whom he is anxious to enter into friendly relations.

The same writer tells us that all this scheme, though of course not set forth as clearly and concisely as by him, was expressed to him by a village chief of the Wa-boni in the great forest of Sokok, on the eastern coast of Africa and that he had the same experience amongst the A-koa or Negrilloes of Gabon. "It seems to me," he adds, "that this fundamental idea, which is so simple and which harmonizes with all these manifestations, should be regarded as the basis of the religious conceptions and practices of primitive man." The communion takes place at a sacrificial meal of which Jevons says, after close analysis of the whole material, that it must take place at a certain spot, at a certain time, be carried out by certain persons in a certain way and for a certain purpose. The details of that matter cannot be related here.

But there is one point of real importance which having regard to the purpose of this book, must be fully dealt with. It will at once have been no-

ticed that there is a great similarity to be traced between much that has here been said about sacrifice and communion and the teachings of Christianity and especially of the oldest Church of Christianity as well indeed as the Orthodox Greek Church and (with a difference) of Luther and early Lutheranism. There are two ways of looking at this and they shall both be set forth in the language of their champions and not in mine. Those who do not believe in the supernatural are to be satisfied with the idea that these ideas developed somehow in the minds of man and culminated in the observances of the Christian Church.

Thus Reinack: "The great discovery of Professor Robertson Smith has been to show us that sacrifice by communion was older and more primitive than sacrifice by gift; that it was, in fact, the oldest form of sacrifice; that traces of it are found among the Greeks and Romans as well as among the Hebrews; and, lastly, that the communion as observed in Christian churches is only an evolution of this primitive sacrificial rite." If the whole idea really amounts to nothing, it may thus have come about, though the totemistic foundation on which the theory was built is now by no means so secure as it was when that theory was first promulgated.

Those who hold the Theistic belief, however, can look upon the same evidence in quite a different way as has been done by Jevons, at the

time a most convinced totemist, after a very careful discussion of all the available evidence. He says: "Sacrifice and the sacramental meal which followed on it are institutions which are or have been universal.

"The sacramental meal, wherever it exists, testifies to man's desire for the closest union with his god, and to his consciousness of the fact that it is upon such union alone that right social relations with his fellow-man can be set. But before there can be a sacramental meal there must be a sacrifice. That is to say the whole human race for thousands of years has been educated to the conception that it was only through a divine sacrifice that perfect union with God was possible for man. At times the sacramental conception of sacrifice appeared to be about to degenerate entirely into the gift theory; but then, in the sixth century B. C., the sacramental conception woke into new life, this time in search for a perfect sacrifice—a search which led Clement and Cyprian to try all the mysteries of Greece in vain. But of all the great religions of the world it is the Christian Church alone which is so far heir of all the ages as to fulfil the dumb, dim expectation of mankind; in it alone the sacramental meal commemorates by ordinance of its founder the divine sacrifice which is a propitiation for the sins of all the world." In considering these two views we must remember that the first positive informa-



tion which we have is that of the book of Genesis which tells us of the sacrifice of Cain of the fruits of the earth, though there are, of course, those who wave aside such evidence as historical, believing it to be the mere personal dictum of some scribe in Judæa in the seventh century before Christ.

At least this cannot be denied that the writer of Genesis firmly believed that the earliest men on the earth did practice sacrifices; vegetable for the agriculturalist and animal for the pastoral and that the latter were the more acceptable. Nor is there here any idea of communion being associated with the sacrifice. The weight of evidence in this matter is all on the side of Jevons but there is another point which cannot be left out of count when one is considering this and indeed other questions. First principles are the most important things to ascertain, for consciously or unconsciously a man's entire attitude is influenced by them. And the most important of all is that involved in the reply, affirmative or negative to the questions, "Is there Divine governance of the world or not?" and "Is that Governance by an all knowing Deity or by one who is blindly groping his way he knows not where?" There are at least some who would reply to the first in the negative or at least would take up an utterly agnostic attitude to it. As to the second, the fashionable philosophy of the day does for the mo-

ment seem to prefer the developing deity ignorant of the outcome of his task, to the deity of theism who is emphatically a changeless and self-efficient Unit. Followers of this Theistic philosophy will have no difficulty in agreeing with Professor Jevons' views. As to the alternatives suggested Professor Driesch tells that, "those who regard the thesis of the theory of order as necessary for everything that is or can be, must accept theism and are not allowed to speak of 'dieu qui se fait.' "

Sacrifice as we have seen is an integral part of religion and so, as we have yet to learn, is a belief in a future life for the soul. That last is a belief which is traceable in the earliest races which we know of on this earth and that fact has long been recognized. It is however only recently that it has been clearly proved by O. Menghin that the earliest men knew of and offered sacrifices of animals—such is the evidence afforded by recent discoveries in the Drachenloch cavern in the gorge of Tamina and in the Petershöhle in Bavaria. Thus from the beginning of the human race we find man possessed of two of the most important religious ideas and consequently in possession of what cannot otherwise be described than as a full conception of religion.

## CHAPTER VI

### CEREMONIES—RITUAL—PRIESTS—SYMBOLS AND REPRESENTATIONS .

THE sacrifice must be carried out and the sacramental meal be eaten at the same place: that we have seen. Further it is essential that both should be carried out only by certain persons and in a certain way and that once opens up the vistas of priesthood and of ritual to which some attention must now be paid. It seems clear that the father of the family must in the beginning have discharged such priestly functions as had to be carried out. Long after a priesthood was in full swing, it was the paterfamilias who carried out amongst the Romans the ceremonies of the Lemuria described in a later chapter.

From this it would naturally follow that the Chief of the tribe or the King of a people, as their father in all but the flesh, should be their chief priest and such was the case in many instances. Perhaps the most useful example of this is to be found in the history of religious affairs in China. That country from remote antiquity has held a belief in one supreme God though, as

will yet appear, Buddhism and the teachings of Confucius and Lao-tsze have much obscured that belief. Still, up to the end of the Manchurian dynasty it was the custom for the Emperor, as the Son of Heaven and God's chosen representative on earth, once in the year to repair to the sacred Altar of Heaven—an immense erection easily the largest thing of its kind in the world—and there spend the night before the sacrifice in fasting and meditation. Then on the next day he himself performed the rites of sacrifice and was believed to have nothing less than an interview with the Almighty wherein he rendered an account of his doings and received instructions. Moreover it was equivalent to what we should call Treason Felony for any other person to offer up not merely sacrifice but even prayer to the Supreme Being. He might and ought to offer sacrifice to his ancestors but no man but the emperor must approach God Himself, the only link with whom was the ruler and father of the people. When the Manchurian dynasty was dismissed and a Republic came into existence the President (in 1915) set himself to carry on the duties of the now no longer existing Emperor.

The ceremonies were very much abbreviated but the blood and hair of a bullock which had been sacrificed the day before, with silk, wine, soup, grain and jade were offered on the enormous altar and all, save the jade, subsequently

burnt in a great brazier which stands near the altar.

The ceremonies were carried on for some year or two more by the President but it does not seem to have been quite the same thing, and the ceremony, after many hundreds of years of continuance, has, it is understood, lapsed.

This is a very instructive case for it not only shows the sovereign in his position as father of the country and its chief priest but also teaches us that whilst not himself a god, he had powers received from the god. There were kings who were considered actually to be gods by virtue of their office, for example the later Emperors of Rome, but here it was not so and we may recall the Delphic Sybil who was not Apollo by any means but who was inspired by that god.

A priestly order came into existence under most circumstances and two things can always be predicated of such; there are things which priests may not do and things which they alone may do. Perhaps no priest ever had a longer list of tabus or things that he might not do than the Flamen Dialis or priest of Jupiter at Rome, at least in the later days of the Empire. He might not ride nor touch a horse nor see an army under arms, nor wear a ring which was not broken, nor have a knot in any part of his garments. He might not walk under a vine nor touch a dog, a goat, beans, raw meat, ivy or wheat. Those who

care to follow the search for the origins of these curious refusals 'may consult the "Golden Bough." It was not merely the Flamen, but also his wife, who was tied up, for she too might not comb her hair on the day of a certain festival; should she chance to hear thunder, she was tabued until she had offered an expiatory sacrifice. Her shoes must only be made of the leather from the hide of an animal which had been sacrificed. In fact the position of Flamen Dialis became so hampered and hampering that it grew impossible, in spite of the dignity attaching to it, to secure an occupant for the Flamenship. Warde Fowler narrates the case of a ne'er-do-well forced into it to find therein a place for repentance, who was in fact, after performing all its duties quite satisfactorily for the appointed number of years, quite cured of his bad habits and returned to civil life to become a much respected citizen. This is an extreme case but certain prohibitions there have always been. On the other hand it was and is the priest alone who can offer the sacrifice and who is instructed in and can carry on the ritual. Of the former it is not necessary to speak further but naturally something must be said about the latter which seems to be a source of great annoyance to some, judging from the denunciations of "ritual" which one sees though perhaps not now so frequently as in the past. Professor Whitehead has recently been dealing with this

subject at some length and, anything that he says is usually worthy of the most careful attention. He—to my mind—puts the cart before the horse by regarding ritual as a primitive form of human activity which provokes emotions and is eventually carried out to provoke those emotions. A reason must be found for the ritual and hence the invention of myths. Of course there is ritual and ritual, but, in its essence, ritual is no more than the directions for carrying out some religious ceremony, decently and in order. It is, in fact, to religion what drill is to military operations, and neither can be carried out properly without the appropriate accompaniment. That is for religious services which are more than praying and preaching. Anyone who has carefully followed the Mass as celebrated in a Catholic or Greek Orthodox Church, and in both it is regarded as an unbloody sacrifice, can hardly have failed to notice the numerous ritual acts which pass in succession. It has been calculated that they amount to several hundred in each celebration of the Mass. Each has its definite meaning and taken as a whole it is contended, and no doubt perfectly correctly, that the result of these actions, taken collectively, is to keep the attention of the celebrant fixed upon what he is doing. But the point is that the ritual rose out of the ideas which underlie it and not the ideas from the ritual. In fact I cannot recall any convincing instance to the

contrary. Most good things degenerate, if they are not very carefully watched and ritual is one of them and there are cases to be sure and plenty of them where this can be studied. When interest in a religion flags and its practice becomes perfunctory, if there is, as so often is the case, a wealth of ritual, part of it continues to be carried out without consciousness of its meaning until, in time, all recollection of that meaning has disappeared.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate these remarks. Amongst the numerous festivals of the pre-Christian Romans described by Warde Fowler there is one which took place on the 15th of May in each year. On this occasion "a number of bundles—it is said thirty—of rushes which we are told were so bound as to resemble men tied hand and foot, were brought down to the Pons Sublicius and there thrown into the Tiber by the Vestal Virgins. The Pontifices whose business it was to bring down the bundles were of course present and so was the Flamifica Dialis or priestess of Jupiter who put off her bridal vestments for the day and wore mourning.

Such a ceremony must have meant something of importance, yet Fowler states definitely his opinion that "the Romans knew nothing at all of the true history of the Argei," such being the name of the bundles of reeds. One need not consider the suggested explanations put forward by



scholars for the fact remains that here was a ceremony with considerable ritual, the meaning of which was completely lost even when it was being carried out. In the Aures district of North Africa where the little town of Bona is the representative to-day of Hippo, once the episcopal see of St. Augustine, Christianity, once so all important in this part of the world, has quite died out, but there are "left-overs" who call themselves Rumaniyeh and keep certain Christian festivals, notably Christmas Day, without having any idea whatever of their significance. Passing to a totally different part of the world the Todas, a gradually diminishing tribe in the Nilgiri Hills in Hindustan, perhaps a marooned group of white people, worship their buffaloes and things generally connected with the dairy and have numerous deities in addition to these. Yet of the meaning of some of their ceremonies they do not appear to be able to give any explanation. Another phase of forgetfulness perhaps is that which occurs in the drifting down of former pagan practices into Christianized races—a large question which cannot be dealt with here. There is a curious dance performed by the inhabitants of the regions near Lake Titicaca in which special head-dresses are worn. It has all the appearances of being one of the very numerous pre-Columbian dances of religious character and of course the district was one associated with an ancient and remarkable

culture. The present performers can give no explanation of their dance and yet it may be suggested that it once had such meaning but that it has been forgotten. There is, as all the world knows, an immense variety of ritual in both the Latin and Greek Churches to-day but every minute detail of that ritual has its explanation well-known to liturgiologists since both these bodies are living organisms. It is with the dead or dying that these forgetfulnesses are associated. One need not delay over the fact that where ritual is complicated there must be a special body of men or women or both to carry it out, just as there must be trained officers in an army to preside over the various manœuvres of war. Thus the priestly order alone competent to make sacrifice is the depository also of the details of its ritual. Closely connected with this subject is that of religious symbols of which naturally the best known to us to-day is that of the cross on which the Saviour of mankind died. Yet it would be a very great mistake to imagine that the symbol in question was solely connected with Christianity.

To take one instance alone out of others which might be cited, Sir Arthur Evans in his careful examination of the palace of Cnossus in Crete, has come to the conclusion that the central object in the shrine or on the altar of the snake goddess was a stone cross of the Latin type. What its significance to these people, who lived many

centuries before Christ, may have been it is impossible even to guess, yet one thing is obvious, it cannot have had the significance for them that it has for us.

The question of symbols may well be studied through one example the most wide-spread in time and area and perhaps the most fully examined that is the Swastika, also known as Fylfot, Croix Gammée and by other names and familiar to-day to everybody as a symbol of good luck. It is a cross each limb of which bears at its extremity a short stroke at right angles to the main stem which strokes may be directed to the right or to the left for there are right- and left-handed swastikas. This emblem goes far back into antiquity for it was certainly known in the second city of Hissarlik—i.e. the Troy group—that is to say 2-3000 B. C. and in England in the Bronze Age. Moreover it is almost ubiquitous, as a few examples will show. It is commonly found on those curious rude copies of footprints which are known in the east as "Footprints of Buddha." It has been found on a Roman altar at High Rochester near the Roman Wall in the north of England, a place garrisoned by the Varduli, Roman auxiliary troops; on an Ogam stone at Aglish in the County Kerry in Ireland; on a church bell at Hathersage, Derbyshire, founded 1617; in all sorts and conditions of places. Yet there are curious gaps, for it is not known in

Egypt in pre-dynastic nor in dynastic times, though it is all over the Ægean which hardly chimes in with the idea of one school that the culture of the latter came from the former. Nor was it known to the Sumerians nor in Babylon. What was its origin? Had it various origins in various places? It is a simple enough figure and can be obtained by drawing a cross in a circle and then obliterating parts of the circle. Or it may have arisen in various ways. The Ægean school of ethnologists thinks that it was derived from a conventionalised octopus and figures cited for this purpose show certainly some resemblance to the symbol. It has lately been attempted to show that it is a modification of the mode of expressing the ancient Hindu syllable Om, expressive of the Brahminical triad of deities, which when written in the Brahmi character takes the form of two cross pothooks. It is impossible to say that this may not have been one origin of the swastika, but it is quite clear that it could not have been the explanation of all or even of more than a fraction of them. Again it has been suggested that it was a typification of the constellation Ursus Major, the great Bear, Plough or Dipper, in its annual revolution round the Pole star. Probably the most favoured explanation to-day is that it typifies the sun in its apparent movement in the heavens and here it may be remarked, as a further example of its widespread character, that

in A. D. 694 the Empress Wu, an autocratic ruler of China, who assumed herself no less a name than that of Almighty God, issued an imperial edict that the swastika should be used as a symbol for the sun. It is to be seen on pictures of the sun of Chinese design. There are explanations of its use to-day by various peoples but in considering them one must weigh the suggestion of Dr. Marett that the theory *may* grow out of the practice rather than the other way about in questions of magic and in such explanations as we are concerned with now. The Jains, for example, are an ancient sect in India of whom more will be said in another chapter. They go back to 550 B. C. and they make the sign of the swastika much as Catholics make that of the cross, though not on their person or over food or the like but thus: a handful of rice or meal is thrown on the ground in a circle thinner in the centre. Then by four rapid strokes of the finger a swastika appears by the obliteration of parts of the disc of meal. Then the ends are turned up to indicate various forms of life, for so the explanation runs. Thus the main lines crossing one another typify spirit and matter and the turned up ends respectively protoplasmic; plant and animal; human; and celestial life. To get clear of matter one must secure the Three Jewels, typified by three circles made above the swastika which are right belief; right knowledge; right conduct. These bring the

worshipper to the stage of liberation typified by a crescent over the three circles. And finally he will grow into complete liberation indicated by a single circle above the crescent. Now it is perfectly certain that this complicated symbolism is no part of the general or early concept of the swastika. The Jains probably found the symbol in use; they adopted it; and they found a reason for it. Then, as their philosophy deepened, they added to it in the manner mentioned. We may next consider a curious Navajo example. These people have a system of dry paintings in coloured sands laid on the ground, the execution and the symbolism of which belongs to their shamans or medicine men—the ritual and the priest again.

One of the most remarkable of these is a large swastika of four gods, with their feet directed towards the centre of the figure. Each has a very distinct swastika beside him and between each pair is a symbol. Thus the North god is black and to his east side is the tobacco plant, also black. The East god is white and so is the corn stalk which is south of him. The South god is blue and so is the bean-stalk which is to his west. Last come the yellow West god and the pumpkin vine. The centre of the figure is occupied by a bowl of water with black powder on it. It is not uncommon to assign gods to the cardinal points and in pre-Columbian Mexican mythology the god of the West—placed in the front and not he of the

North—was Quetzalcoatl; the East behind was Tlaloc; to the right was the North god, Tetzcatlipoca; and on the left, the South god, Huitzilopochtli.

The Moslem swastika has a guardian angel at each point—the Recorder to the West; the Announcer to the East; Death in the South; and Life in the North. It might be tedious further to heap up examples for enough has been given to show that this symbol is very ancient and very diffused.

Whatever it may have been in the beginning, and it is at least quite possible that it may have been from its origin many things to different peoples who independently worked it out, it has assumed meanings to different peoples to-day which we can, with considerable certainty, claim to have had no part in its original signification.

## CHAPTER VII

### SACRED DANCES—SNAKE WORSHIP

SINCE the first child skipped for joy there must have been such a thing as dancing in the widest sense of the term. When people "jump for joy" they execute a form of dance and it is probable that the dance of Jephtha's daughter when meeting her father on his return from victory, the dance of the Israelite women after the passage of the Red Sea and David's dance before the ark of the covenant were merely of this class. That may have explained Michal's annoyance, for to dance at all was a great loss of dignity for a man, in more than one race. Amongst the Romans such a thing could only be explained by madness or intoxication. Here may perhaps be interjected a note that the Abyssinians who practise a somewhat aberrant type of Christianity and believe themselves descendants of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba have a religious dance which they hold to be that which David performed before the ark. Sacred dances can be traced far back in history, for some of the Egyptian temples in Dynastic periods had regular corps of temple dancers and



the custom is still to be met with in the higher religions. Even in the Catholic Church there still linger the dances at Echternach and at Seville. The former is not really a dance, though it is called so, but a kind of procession, in honour of the deliverance of the place from some plague centuries ago, in which the processionists rhythmically take three steps forward and then two back, so that passage past a given spot takes an inordinate length of time. The dance in Seville Cathedral, which takes place once each year, is a very ancient function also more in the nature of a rhythmic procession. Next on the scale may be cited the folk-dances of England once so popular and prevalent, now only rescued from oblivion by the efforts of Societies. These are claimed, and, it may quite well be, rightly so, to be the remnants of pre-christian ritual dances, the significance of which has long been lost to the performers. At the other extreme are the dances of Mohammedan dervishes, the howling and twirling Refaya, founded in the 12th century A. D., and the Maonlaniya or twirlers only, founded in the 13th, in both of which a kind of madness is produced by twirling round at a rapid pace with or without wild cries. However, the topic of religious dances with specific objects may most fruitfully be studied by considering them in one area, and there is none where there is greater variety than the New World where there are and have been a vast va-

riety of dances, some of which may be briefly reviewed. Perhaps a beginning may be made with the so-called Medicine Dance, medicine being the term used for magic, as will appear later. In the long houses of the Iroquois confederacy this dance consisted in the passage round the long house, open at both ends, of men, women and even children carrying in their hands skins of animals, totems or other objects which they presented to the gaze of the spectators who lined the walls of the house. Amongst the Winnebagos, the medicine-dance or Mankani is carried out by the members of a secret society and its object is the prolongation of life and the inspiration of virtues for the members of the confraternity.

The war dance was intended to stir up militant feelings in the braves and was danced by many tribes, the Plains Indians having a secret confraternity of Dog-Dancers whose specialty was a form of this dance. The Scalp dance after the battle, in which the scalps were carried about at the ends of rods, was a dance of thanksgiving carried out by the women of the tribe alone, whilst the men stood round and shouted. A large number of dances here and elsewhere were ceremonies intended to secure an abundant supply of food and it is obvious that they would be of different types in relation to the types of culture amongst which they flourished. Thus the nomadic wanderers over the prairies, whose food was largely the bison,

danced the bison-dance in order that they might have good hunting and in that dance some of the dancers wore huge masks simulating the heads of bison. The custom of mask wearing is very wide-spread and very ancient. There were the bear masks worn by other Amerindians in the Bear dance and many others. There is a prehistoric European cave-painting, representing a masked dancer of at least twelve thousand years ago who is gotten up as a reindeer. The horns are on his head, a simulated tail hangs down behind and the limbs of the animal are marked out in black on those of the man. He was making "big medicine" for the good hunting of his tribe. In a mound at Hopewell in Ross County, Ohio, there was found the skull of a man crowned with a kind of metal cap to which were affixed wooden horns, imitating those of the elk, and covered with thin sheet-copper. It is impossible not to suspect that here was another medicine-man, of another age and place, but accoutred for the same reason. The Pueblo Indians mask as elks, antelopes, mountain goats, all of these being animals which they hunt. The Miamis have a feather-dance in which, bearing rods bedecked with feathers, they simulate the movements of birds but whether this dance relates to bird capture is unknown to me. The Salmon dance of the Indians of British Columbia has obvious reference to what was their staple food.

Tribes of agricultural culture on the other hand have dances directed to quite other objects; especially in arid districts to an adequate supply of rain. In Arizona for example, as might be expected, there is a well-known rain-dance. A similar object is pursued in the Eagle dance for that bird, very naturally, is looked upon as a kind of liaison officer between the gods of the clouds and those of the earth and it is stated that an eagle may be found to-day as a tribal pet in more than one place in North America. One of the most interesting dances of the agricultural kind is the snake-dance of the Hopi Indians of Arizona performed at least every second year by a special secret society of the Moqui tribe. The story is that their original ancestress brought forth snakes from which they of to-day are descended. During the dance they carry venomous snakes in their mouths and at its termination, these snakes are liberated to go into the desert and produce rain and thus fertility amongst the crops. The Plumed Serpent dance of the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande is performed by a chain of dancers connected by a lengthy kind of wreath capping their heads, with projections here and there, and this is also a vegetation dance. The snake as an object of worship is a commonplace in ethnology for that form of religion is found everywhere and at all times. The shrine of the snake goddess of Cnosus described by Sir Arthur Evans goes back many

centuries and is at least one of the earliest manifestations. The great Khmer temple of Angkor in Cambodia is full of such representations and in it there is a huge stone cobra supported in its immense length by a row of stone figures of men. It is only necessary to remind readers of the cobra worship in India, associated with Buddhism also, since there is a legend that the cobra shielded Buddha from the rays of the sun when asleep by holding its hood over him. Amongst the inhabitants of Central Australia the snake totem is an important object and the natives make mounds on which is the design of a snake, as well as adorning their own bodies with its representation.

Snake-dances are widely distributed for example amongst the native tribes of the Amazon district where corps of women snake-dancers are kept and highly trained. These girls dance quite nude but with their bodies painted in bright patches, something like the camouflage of ships during the war, and, with their arms entwined around one another's necks and their parti-coloured bodies, simulate the movements of some great snake.

To return however to fertility dances which led up to the subject just touched on. The Basket dance of some of the Amerindians is a fertility dance performed by a ring of women representing all ages from infancy to extreme old age and likewise all stages of the wheat from seed to the fin-

ished cake. The Pueblo districts have sun-dances now performed by a couple but once by many more which take place at the time of sowing the seed and are also for the promotion of fertility. Finally may be mentioned the Green Corn dance of the southern and eastern parts of the States which was a kind of harvest festival being a thanksgiving ceremony after the crop had been taken in and not a petition for fertility like so many of the others. No doubt the origin of many of these dances goes back to remote antiquity but others may have had a much more recent origin and of these certainly the Ghost dance is one and, as its history is well known and very instructive, it may be briefly described here as a conclusion to this subject.

This dance was originated in 1889 by an Indian of the Tetons on the Sioux Reserve in western Dakota. He was one of the wild prophets who have arisen from time to time amongst the tribes and have often preluded trouble. Wovoka was his name, but he was generally known as "Jack Wilson" from the name of a white farmer for whom he had worked for some time and from whom he had picked up some fragments of Christian knowledge which he worked into his supposed revelations. At any rate he returned to his tribe to announce that he was Christ come on earth to free the Indians. He preached a gospel of general brotherhood and the restoration of the territories

which had been theirs to the natives of the land. And amongst other things he introduced the Ghost dance as a religious ceremony the object of which was to cause the white oppressors to be wiped out either by a land-slide or a whirlwind, neither of which was to harm the native populations. Further the dance was to summon the spirits of the dead Indians who were to come back driving herds of bison before them. The dance took place once a week and the dancers were provided with decorated shirts which they were told would magically protect them from bullets in battle, as the old painted shields had in the past kept off arrows. The dancers began by a preliminary fast of twenty-four hours, followed by a vapour-bath after which their foreheads were marked by the great man of the occasion with a cross, a crescent, or a circle. The company gathered round a decorated tree and a young girl fired four bone-tipped arrows from a bow to the four quarters of the horizon. Subsequently she stood by the tree pointing with a red stone pipe to the west i.e., towards Nevada whence the dance was said to have originated. Song and dance followed and finally the dancers sank into a swoon. After a long fast and a sweat-bath such vigorous exercise would naturally produce that effect. During that swoon they experienced or were supposed to experience and very likely did, certain mental pictures which, on coming to themselves they were

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expected to narrate to the great man who thereupon repeated them to the crowd with his comments and explanations of their meaning. Such a picture of the origin, nature and purpose of a modern dance is very instructive in considering those of a much more ancient date.

Recently Edwin Loeb of the University of California has been describing how the ghost dance passed from Nevada into California and found amongst the Pomo, a sedentary central California tribe, a native ghost-dance with bull-roarers, masks, initiation ceremonies and mutilation. The new dance when it reached the Pomo not only completely wiped out the old dance, but the religion of which it was a part, including the secret society which was associated with it and its doings.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AFTER LIFE

THE Fans—a highly cannibal African tribe—say of death that “it is like the moon, who has seen the other side of it?” Yet no known race now or at any other time appears to have entertained any doubts as to the continued existence after death of something retaining the personality of the dead man or woman in another world. Sollas in his “Ancient Hunters” remarks on the kind of shock of surprise with which one meets with indubitable evidence of this belief in the latter times of the Glacial Epoch certainly some ten to twelve thousand years back if not many more. Jevons thus sums up the universal ideas on this matter which are latent in the human mind. The soul continues to exist after death and its fate depends on the deeds done in the flesh. It must undergo some transformation and eventually hopes to re-join the object of its worship.

This is of course a rough sketch of ideas which, as will now be seen, vary very widely. But the first point is that to which attention must now be directed. The soul exists after death; where?

There again there is the widest range of opinions. The classical idea was that it was in a place of gloom—"Rather would I on earth be the hind of a landless man, than king over all the dead" says Achilles in the Odyssey. The Hebrew Sheol and the Babylonian Aralu were not cheerful places in any way. Yet even in these unpleasing spots we find the idea which permeates so many eschatologies, namely that the life was a continuation of that led here. Achilles after all was a king and Orion hunted phantom beasts. The Egyptian idea is thus set forth in the Book of the Dead: "there shall be given to him bread and beer, and flesh upon the tables of Ra; he will work in the fields of Aalu, and there shall be given to him the wheat and barley which are there, for he shall flourish as though he were on earth." It is the same story in so many parts of the world. As Tylor put it: "there the soul of the dead Karen, with the souls of his axe and cleaver, builds his house and cuts his rice; the soul of the Algonkin hunter hunts souls of beavers and elks, walking on the souls of his snowshoes over the soul of the snow; the fur wrapped Kamchadale drives his dog-sledge; the Zulu milks his cows and drives his cattle to kraal; South American tribes live on, whole or mutilated, healthy or sick, as they left this life, leading their old lives." Their old lives—that is the common teaching and appears to be that of the spiritism of to-day judging from "Ray-

mond" and other such books. The continuation may, however, be raised to a higher index of pleasure as accords with the racial ideas, thus the Moslem paradise is one of highly sensual and sexual delights. Or there may be perfect happiness of a natural and blameless kind as in the Celtic After World, with its happy isles where it was always afternoon and always the balmiest kind of spring. That idea easily turns into a land of faery. With Mithraism and the Mystery religions, which were the forerunners of Christianity, came the higher idea of a supernatural happiness dependent however on the life conduct of the owner of the soul, and coupled with the opposite condition of punishments. Quite a different line of thought is that which supposes that there are only a limited number of souls and that after death, those which have passed into the other world do so only temporarily, in due course to take their places once more in human bodies—"I was a king in Babylon, you were a Christian slave." Thus the Bakonde, a Bantu tribe, hold that the souls of the dead do not go to a distant country but wait near at hand to be reincarnated and the diviners are supposed to be able to say when a child is born whose soul inhabits it and thus what name it shall have. In other places the dead are buried in or near the hut or facing it so that the soul may be close at hand to become the child of a woman of the tribe. But it is obvious that some

of the souls might not be desired as further companions and the bodies of notorious bad men and women were skilfully orientated so that they might find it hard to rediscover the place where they had formerly lived and made themselves disliked. Of course the idea we are dealing with is closely linked with that of transmigration perhaps to-day held by more people than any other notion. "What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?" says the Clown to Malvolio,

"That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird."

"What thinkest thou of that opinion?"

"I think nobly of the soul and in no way approve his opinion." Thus the much maltreated steward. Pythagoras who lived in the 6th century B. C. is credited with introducing the idea but tells us that he got it from the Egyptians. And Empedocles, his disciple, says that sin is the cause of transmigration of souls and that the length of the round is 30,00 years. The Egyptian idea was that only the wicked need or would undergo this transmigration, but that the whole round must be gone through—birds, fish, animals, once a commencement had been made. There is no escape, for the soul must go on until it returns to a man once more when it may attain the Osiris i.e. immortality. The Egyptian differs in various ways from the Indian idea for transmigration is an almost universal idea in Hindustan and neighbor-

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ing lands. There it is believed that all, even the good, must go through the process but there is no regular course as with the Egyptians. The good get a good reincarnation but may then do wrong and be put back with the wicked into forms of low type and evil associations. The final end is absorption or extinction when all evil attributes have been eliminated.

The common idea amongst white peoples, at any rate who believe in such things, is to be afraid of ghosts but that, as we have seen, is by no means a universal notion. There is in many places a sense of companionship apart altogether from the idea that they are spirits waiting to return to human form in new-born children. In Bonny (Nigeria) the dead are buried under the doorstep and a funnel leads down to them through which from time to time blood is poured for their nourishment. In Java a hollow bamboo extends into the grave so that food and drink may be poured into it. The dolmens or stone chambers of which many exist in Ireland and quite a number in England and elsewhere, have in some places, though not in western Europe, a hole in one of the stones through which food could be inserted for the use of the dead. Both the friendly and unfriendly ideas are to be met with in the Roman practice.

The Lemuria of the Romans, already alluded to, took place on May 9th, 11th, and 13th. At midnight on each of these three days the pater-

familias arose, and, having washed his hands, walked barefoot through the house, snapping his fingers to frighten off the ghosts and throwing black beans over his shoulders for them to feed upon. Nine times he cried out "With these beans I redeem myself and mine," and finally after making a lustration of sacred water and beating a bronze gong, he calls out, once more nine times, "Ghosts of my ancestors go hence." There was a parallel ceremony amongst the Greeks, the Anthesteria, a spring festival, and the idea of both was to keep the house free of pernicious and troublesome spirits. On the other hand the Roman festival of Parentalia shows a wholly different conception. This took place from the 13th to the 21st of February, a kind of All Souls Week, and of such holiness that no business might be carried on; even the temples were closed, and marriages were forbidden. The family went to the tomb where its defunct members were laid; they offered honey, milk and oil; they hung it with garlands of roses and violets; and they partook there of a simple meal which the dead were supposed to share. The dead were asked for their blessing and bidden farewell. Finally on the 22nd, the whole family met at the central home for a feast of love on which occasion all quarrels must be set aside. Places were set at the table for the dead and the little statues of the family gods were on it. So that for one day in the year the

little comfortable family gods, those who worshipped them and those who had but recently done so met in one company from which all kinds of evil feelings were supposed to be eliminated. Cara Cognatio or Caristia was the name of this beautiful custom i.e., of Our Dear Ones or Dear Kinsfolk. The evidence which we have for the belief in the life in another world amongst peoples whom we only know by their remains depends on what are known as "Grave Goods" or "Accompanying Gifts" to which some attention must now be paid. But first it will be necessary to allude to the two main methods of disposal of the dead, inhumation and cremation. The former is what we usually mean by burial and may have been in the contracted position or at full length. The former was the custom in the earliest periods.

"He buried his dead with their toes  
Tucked up, an original plan,  
Till their knees came right under their nose,  
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man,"

as Andrew Lang puts it in the well-known ballad. Later, e.g. amongst the Saxon invaders of Britain, the bodies were laid full length, flat on their backs, with spear and shield and flagon. Or again they were laid at full length and on the left side and there are numerous interesting customs as to the orientation of the body, the head being

sometimes to the east, or again to the west. The other and later method is that of cremation, and when it comes into use, it seems to indicate if not the coming in of a new race, at least the influence of some new religious idea. Thus the Stone Age people of Britain inhumated; cremation came in with or about the time of the knowledge of metals—the Bronze Age. What exactly it meant is a much disputed point for it may have been carried out with the idea of purification or with that of destruction though, even in the case of cremated individuals, unburnt bones or a bone may be mingled with the ashes. One thing is quite clear—there is always an intense conservatism about funerary matters and a radical change of this kind means a considerable ethnological convulsion. Of course it must be remembered that, to some extent, the two practices continued side by side, for there are inhumations in the round barrows in England where the ordinary interments are jars of ashes after cremation.

But whether inhumation or cremation was adopted the accompanying gifts were not neglected. Some instances of these may now be described commencing with what is one of the earliest known. This is a ceremonial interment in the cave known as Chapelle aux Saintes in the Dordogne, in France. Around the body lay well worked stone implements, fragments of ochre and broken bones. The race to which the dead person



belonged is called Mousterian from the type spot for implements of the kind, at le Moustier. It is very far back in the history of mankind in fact that race is the first to whom we can apply such a title for any earlier relics are but fragments and very much disputed fragments too. Thus at the earliest point of our acquaintance with the human race we have this indisputable proof of their belief in the survival of the soul. Other very ancient examples are those of the Grotte des Enfants at Mentone where the skeletons of an old woman and a young man, aged from fifteen to seventeen, of that negroid race which seems to have percolated into southern Europe from northern Africa, were associated with shell bracelets and a head-dress. A striking find in a barrow near Dunstable in the south of England shows the skeleton of a woman, with that of her baby clasped in her arms, around which there were a number of flint implements and a complete ring of fossil sea-urchins from the chalk which is the chief geological feature of the district.

All these belong to the Stone Age and scores of others could be given from all parts of Europe and the same may be said of the age of Bronze. An interment of the Early Iron Age in the Hautes Alpes in France is that of a woman lying on her back with her left cheek laid against the ground. With her were buried a collar of nine amber beads with seventeen of glass and eleven of bronze.

There were several brooches, twenty-six bracelets on the right arm and eight on the left and finally forty-six bronze buttons, arranged in a sinuous line from neck to toes, marked the line of what was once a long soutane whose fabric had completely disappeared.

Sometimes the interments were on a much greater scale. The Scythians buried their chieftains with a squadron of men and horse around, provided for the occasion, in order that the leader might not go unaccompanied into the next world. In Scandinavia it was a boat's crew which was provided and the dead person was interred with treasures and an appropriate crew, as at Gokstad and Oseberg, in one of the long boats in which those stout sailors braved the rough waters of the North Sea. We have a relic of that idea to-day when the officer's charger, saddled and bridled, is taken to his dead master's funeral. He comes back now, but there was a time when he did not but was slaughtered that his ghost might be serviceable to his former owner in other fields. That suggests another point of interest. Often, though not always, the accompanying gifts have been broken purposely by those who placed them in the grave. A recently discovered example is that of a place of burial in the south of Sweden where a number of human and animal bones with flint implements were exposed with some seven thousand fragments of pottery ob-

viously broken on being deposited in the tomb. The explanation is this: the spirit does not go into the next world until the man is dead, neither can the ghosts of the pottery go there until the pottery is killed or broken. But there must have been some other theory in the minds of these people since there were many gifts which were not broken. A further remark must be made as to the red ochre which is so often found with the remains of early people. That these people raddled themselves like many other people, including a very large number of quite civilised women to-day, is highly probable and the rouge was left there in order that the dead person might make a decent appearance in his new surroundings. But it has also been suggested that it was placed there with an idea that it would have revivifying influence on the remains. That notion is held to explain the fact that in some cases the bones which have been bereft of their soft parts, are raddled with ochre. Elliot Smith, who holds this view, has in his book "The Evolution of the Dragon," some very pertinent observations on primitive man with which I completely concur. "The common statement that primitive man was a fantastically irrational child is based upon a fallacy. He was probably as well endowed mentally as his modern successors; and was as logical and rational as they are; but many of his premises were wrong, and he hadn't the necessary body of accumulated wis-

dom to help him to correct his false assumptions." Thus he argued: the blood is the life; it is red; so is the ochre; therefore red things are revivifying and let us supply the dead person with the best that we have.

A curious instance of the mixture of the old idea with modern objects is given by Sir William Butler, in his "Great Lone Land." He there tells us that on his journey across what was then unknown Canada in the second half of the last century he saw the interment of Pe-na-Koam, a Black-foot chief, who was laid to rest in a tent hung round internally with some scarlet material. There were buried with him six revolvers; two American repeating rifles with ammunition for both arms and four hundred blankets, whilst twelve horses were slain at the door of the tent. When one reflects on the value to the tribe of the firearms surrendered to the dead man, one has adequate proof of the intense belief in the next world and the kind of life carried on in it which his fellow Blackfeet had. This somewhat lengthy account of burial customs may be terminated by a note as to the actual customs to-day of the gypsies who still roam as nomads over English country roads. They have curious views as to death believing that the dead body pollutes so that they will not lay out their own dead if it can possibly be avoided and any food which is in the tent where the person died is buried. In some cases the wagon

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and tent and other possessions of the dead person are burnt and that even if that person was only a child. The idea was that the ghost might be annoyed at the use of its belongings and perhaps become a nuisance. The horses and donkeys of the deceased were sold, but only to gorgios or non-gypsies, who did not, it may be presumed, matter. Finally the coffin for the dead person is made unusually large and indeed must be so for his clothes, his watch and any jewelry he might possess with a knife, fork, plate, hammer, corn and bread are placed in it. Further at annual visits to the grave gifts are left. Beer is poured out on it and tobacco, sugar, (and even in one case a Christmas pudding) are left on it. Though the matter is not quite clear it can hardly be doubted that there is or was an idea that the dead would make use of the objects given to them and further it seems certain that it was felt that, thus being looked after, the ghost would not be a jealous one nor would it be tempted to annoy the survivors.

## CHAPTER IX

### ANCESTOR WORSHIP

THIS topic naturally succeeds that of the last chapter and it will be well to commence by distinguishing between certain matters which at times are confused in connection with this subject.

First may be considered prayers for a departed soul, such as the Jews use: "It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" says the writer of the Book of Maccabæus after describing how Judas Maccabæus "sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously of the resurrection."

When a common Christianity had sway over the civilised world, in connection with the doctrine of Purgatory or an Intermediate State for such of the dead as had not merited severer punishment, nor deserved immediate admission to Heaven, prayers for such souls were said everywhere. When the Eastern Church split off from the Western both retained these doctrines. But at

the Reformation the Protestant party abandoned the idea of Purgatory and naturally and logically therewith the prayers for the dead which had been said in so many Chantries and other places. There is a small but important point however to be noted here. Other religions such as the Egyptian and Chinese also called for prayers for the souls of the departed but there was this difference. The doctrine of the Christian Churches, which have retained these prayers, is that they will expedite the release of the soul from its temporary house of bondage, but no more—they have no effect upon the position which it will occupy in the place of the blessed. But in the two other religions just mentioned, it is held that the actual position in the next world of the soul depends more upon what is done for it by those left behind than it does upon what the soul itself had done during life. There is a clear difference between the two ideas which might not at once be grasped.

Another subject to be taken up here is that of offerings at the tomb. These may be mere expressions of grief or sympathy like the floral offerings sometimes lavished on modern funerals. These are not related to prayers for the soul nor are actual offerings for the use of the soul as dealt with in the last chapter.

The third of these matters is the Funeral Feast. The Parentalia, described in the last chapter was an occasion of this kind but the idea is a common

motif on tombstones in the Roman Empire—there are a number in Britain—as well as in Assyria and Greece. In early tombs in Attica the dead man is represented with a cup of wine and the pomegranate, held to be the special fruit of the dead, sitting in state to receive the visits, perhaps prayers of his descendants. On the Roman tombstones the dead man is to be seen seated on a couch, with his wife and child it may be, and beside him a three-legged table on which wine and fruit are placed for the repast. Though these ceremonies of the feast of the dead were not originally in the nature of ancestor-worship it is obvious that they might easily slip into it. The Christian attitude towards prayers for the dead has been dealt with and it may justly be remarked that the Jews drew the line quite clearly between such prayers and ancestor-worship. The latter ran counter to their clear and pure view as to the future life and the effect thereon of man's doings in the flesh, so that ancestor worship was forbidden to them and of course also to Christians. What is the connection of ancestor-worship with religion? According to Tylor ancestor-worship was one of the rungs of the ladder leading from atheism to monotheism. The weak point of this is that there is no valid proof for it—quite the contrary. It is not quite one of Haeckel's suppositious zoölogical links, though it belongs to the same phase of thought, for ancestor-worship exists and



Monera does not, but ancestor-worship does not exist as a link in a chain but is rather quite detached. We have no evidence that prehistoric man practised ancestor-worship, in fact the evidence, such as it is, goes quite the other way. And it is quite clear that there are races which know nothing and never have known anything of ancestor-worship. That disposes of the theory in question and of the idea that ancestor-worship was the beginning of all religion. That was an idea put forward by Herbert Spencer: "the rudimentary form of all religion is the propitiation of dead ancestors" a sort of synthesis of Tylor's two stages; the "Ghost Theory of Religion" as it has been called. For the reasons mentioned above and for others which can be imagined from what has been said in previous chapters, this idea is quite dead.

It cannot even be said that ancestor-worship was created by religion; rather should it be said that it grew up side by side with it, one of those accretions of which we shall see there are so many. Let us consider China, perhaps *par excellence* the country of ancestor-worship. The old, original, undoubted religion of that country, as already stated, was the worship of one God but the worship of that God, as we have learnt, was confined to the Emperor who was His mandatory upon earth and by whom alone He could be approached; in fact it was a penal offence for any-

one else to attempt such a procedure. It should be mentioned that there is no kind of evidence that this Supreme Being was a deified ancestor. So the bulk of the population, cut off from contact of any kind with their Deity, fell back upon ancestor-worship. There were of course the "Transcendent Beings" which were the objects of a kind of secondary worship, patrons of harvests and so on. But they *were* ancestral spirits; the *manes* of great men of the past or of ancient benefactors who were worshipped as protectors and so were merely a special class of objects in the general scheme of ancestor-worship.

The cultus of the dead, the great concern of the living is what we have to consider. Professor Giles speaking of the "universal worship of ancestors, which has been from time immemorial such a marked feature of Chinese religious life" says "at death, the spirit of a man or woman is believed to remain watching over the material interests of the family to which the deceased had belonged. Offerings of various kinds, including meat and drink, are from time to time made to such a spirit, supposed to be particularly resident in an ancestral tablet which is preserved in the ancestral hall—or cupboard, as the case may be. These offerings are made for the special purpose of conciliating the spirit, and of obtaining in return a liberal share of the blessings and good things of this life. This is the essential feature

of the rite, and this it is which makes the rite an act of worship pure and simple; so that only superficial observers could make the mistake of classifying ancestral worship as practised in China, with such acts as laying wreaths upon the tombs of deceased friends and relatives. When the food and drink or whatever it may have been was placed in front of the tablet, the spirit was invited to attend by ringing of bells, beating of drums and chanting of songs. It was by no means expected that the ancestor would appear and make use of the offerings but it was hoped that the exalted being would become aware of what his descendants were doing for him and make adequate return for it. On more than ordinarily solemn occasions a direct descendant was clothed in the garments of the ancestor whom it was desired to honour and to this living representative were made the offerings of food and so on and to him the songs were sung."

Shinto i.e., the Way of the Gods, is the ancient religion of Japan inextricably mixed up to-day with a kind of Buddhism imported long ago from China, of which more will be said in another chapter, which has exerted also much influence in introducing ancestor-worship. The "conversion" to Buddhism took place about A. D. 600 and before that time we have nothing historical to go upon. The third period or period of renaissance of pure Shinto dates from 1700. That meant a

complete elimination of all dogma and all moral law and also entailed adhesion to two principles only: follow the impulses of Nature and obey the Mikado. The original chief temple of this faith, if such it can be called, was a rude erection with a thatched roof and all temples are still supposed to be built of unpainted hinoki wood nor are lacquer nor metals permitted for ornamentation. The objects of worship consist of a metal mirror typical of the divine light of Amaterasu, the Sun-goddess; a ball of rock crystal representing the power and purity of the gods; and the gohei a kind of wand decorated with scalloped paper. That is theoretically the religion of the country but in reality, where there is any, it is a species of polytheism based on ancestor apotheosis. Kami, i.e. that which is above, is the word used for a god and there are myriads of them. First, there are the "Gods of Nature," Amaterasu being the highest of these. They are personifications of natural forces and objects and thus animistic. Then there are also the "god men" the highest of whom is Jimmu Tenno the legendary founder of the Imperial Dynasty. But any death of anybody may add to the Pantheon of Kamis, though it is usually only the souls of generals, scholars and other persons who have been distinguished from the crowd in some manner that are, at any rate in any kind of official manner, added to the throng. But theoretically

any person's spirit may be thus honoured, hence a copious ancestor-worship is derived. Another Oriental land in which we meet with a somewhat similar state of affairs is Annam, theoretically Buddhistic, but actually entirely given over to ancestor-worship, each house having its family altar at which, on occasions, the head of the family officiates making offerings of wine, rice and scented twigs. In one form or another ancestor-worship exists in large portions of Africa and as an example it is known that Kubuka, the war god of the Baganda was a real man, who existed a century or so ago, and whose bones are in the Cambridge (England) Museum. He was a man of striking character; deified after death and now the official war-god of the race.

This is perhaps the best place to deal with the idea of the god despot the deified living or dead monarch. The Emperors of China, when there were such, like the Mikados, in the past at any rate, and the Incas all belong in one way or another to this type. But its most interesting developments were in the Greek and Roman worlds and there its introduction was due to Alexander the Great. The monarch does not seem to have been worshipped as a god amongst the Assyrio-Babylonian Semites nor amongst the Iranians and, though the Persian kings were no doubt supposed to have been of divine descent and were represented with a halo, they are never

in their inscriptions described as gods. But when Alexander penetrated into Egypt and became the Pharaoh, it was necessary for him to have a divine father and he was hailed as the son of Ammon Re or Ra, after which he seems to have claimed divine honours not merely in Egypt but in all parts of his great Empire. This he was entitled to do on Egyptian lines for the Pharaoh was not merely the offspring of Re but Re himself as we learn from the monuments of Rameses iii on which the inscriptions run "Thou are Re—when thou risest, the people live." In Rome Julius Cæsar played the part that Alexander did further east.

After more tentative moves in this direction "at last" says Dion Cassius, "they proclaimed him Jupiter Julius outright, and ordered that a temple should be dedicated to him, and to his Clemency, appointing Antony their priest." Octavian, who afterwards accepted the title of Augustus and is better known under that name, Cæsar's nephew and successor, was cautious in his acceptance of divinity, though he aimed at it, but the very name Augustus was a sacred epithet. Vegetius, a military writer of the fourth century A. D. who dedicated his work to Theodosius, and, was therefore, writing under a Christian Emperor, says: "when the Emperor has received the name of Augustus, faithful devotion must be shown to him,

as to a present and corporeal God." The major form of "Divine Right."

Augustus, however, would not allow temples to be built to himself save in association with Rome. As early as A.D. 29 the province of Asia was permitted to build a temple at Ephesus to Rome and the "divine" Julius for Romans, and another at Pergamus to Rome and himself for non-Romans.

That temple at Pergamos is believed to have been the "seat of Satan" mentioned by St. John, the Divine, in his message to the Angel at the church of Pergamos.

Others followed suit so that the Eastern cult came to include all previous emperors who had been consecrated together with the living ruler. Nero was even described as the Saviour of the world. There was the altar of Rome and Augustus at Lugdunum, now Lyons, which was to be the centre of loyalty to the empire and the emperor for "the three Gauls." A similar altar was erected at Cologne to have the same position as regarded the Germans subject to the empire. Another for Spain was erected at Tarraco (Tarragona). In Britain there was at Camulodunum (Colchester) the altar to Rome and the divine Claudius. It will be remembered that in the Acts of the Apostles it is narrated that the people of Tyre and Sidon cried out to Herod Agrippa "the voice of a god and not of a man," and "forthwith

an angel of the Lord struck him because he gave not the glory to God." Even Constantine, who is at least described as a Christian emperor, though he does not seem to have permitted personal adoration, was hailed as more than man for his official acts, and his family are called divine and he is claimed to be eternal. Thus the ancestor-worship took a step down and worship was given to those whose ancestors were worshipful and who would themselves become worshipful when they were dead, by a kind of anticipation.

The fact is that the manifestations of ancestor-worship are very numerous and varied and arise from diverse notions as to their powers and functions. Thus in Africa the Ngunis believe that the souls underground have a very potent influence on vegetation and fertility and so should be propitiated. The Hereros think that the souls of the dead punish crimes and hence those guilty of them must also make propitiation to them. And there are a number of other views.



## CHAPTER X

### ANIMISM

THE term animism is ambiguous and must be defined. It is used as by McDougal as the name for that body of thought which believes that man possesses a soul. With that conception we are not here dealing. There is the use of the word for nature-worship with which the latter part of this chapter will deal. And there is the use in connection with a theory to account for man forming the idea of God, already mentioned in Chapter III, which was put forward by Tylor in 1871, and, backed by all the weight of his personal importance at the time and his collection of facts, attained immense popularity. The date is significant as will yet appear.

This important theory must be considered step by step. First, man gets the idea of a spirit or of the soul from his dreams. This is the bed-rock of the theory and must be carefully considered. In the first place it is to be admitted that dreams, as Schmidt says, do affect primitive people very acutely and that they recognize far less than we do the difference between dream and reality. That

is a proved ethnological fact. There was a great teacher of Taoism in the 4th century B.C. named Chuang Tzu," but usually known, from the saying now to be quoted, "Butterfly Chuang." The difficulty which he raises was perhaps in his case not a real one but a more or less poetical fancy, but it throws light on the point under consideration. "Once upon a time," he said, "I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. Suddenly I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man."

In the next place primitive man does believe that the spirit goes out of the body in dreams for example, as the Eskimo think, to hunt, and so strongly does he believe this that in some cases as, for example among the Tagals of Luzon, he will not wake a sleeping person lest his soul should still be away. In the next place he gets omens from dreams—so do people of races which are of a higher culture to-day who resort to "Napoleon's Book of Fate" or other dream manuals and of course the psychoanalysts make great and no doubt more scientific play with them. But that does not come into the thread of our argument except in so far as it affects the importance attached to them by primitive races. The next step in the argument is that if the spirit goes out tem-

porarily in dreams it goes out altogether at death. But if it could and did go and come before, it must have had an extra-corporeal existence and, therefore, still has, but in another world. Let us reserve criticism until the entire theory has been set out. So far we arrive at the point where according to Tylor primitive man has come to believe in a soul.

Second, this discarnate soul may be hurtful or useful and may well be propitiated and hence arises the idea of ancestor-worship discussed in the last chapter.

Third, if man has a soul, so must every other thing have one, animals and plants doubtless, and even sticks and stones. From which thought arise nature-worship, fetishism and idolatry as the term is commonly used. Of these the most important is a cult of nature because it leads to Polytheism, with traces of dualism for there are good and evil things. Out of this emerges monotheism in one of several possible ways.

First of all one of a number of polytheistic deities may be for some reason selected as the great deity—the sky-god for example in spite of the fact that there were many others, sun, sea and the rest available. Almost the same as this is the formation of a Pantheon as in Greece and Rome with a President of the Immortals—Zeus or Jupiter—a “tidying-up process” as Jevons calls it. Or again the path of pantheism may be

followed as by a number of races and the deity be looked upon as the *anima mundi*.

In criticising this tidy, compact theory it is first worth while to notice the date, for it was the time when the recent hypothesis of evolution was at its hottest and before it had cooled down under a more careful examination of its limitations. It was then thought that genealogical trees of all kinds of animals and plants could be constructed and with great approach to certitude, and similar ladders were being built in other sciences by which from simplicity one ascended to complexity. How fallacious this system may be in zoölogy and botany has often been shown, for example by Bateson in connection with sweet-peas, and in ethnology it is a most dangerous method to follow. Of course the explanation would explain, but then we must know very well, if we read detective stories, that there may be a large number of plausible explanations of any given group of facts, all but one of which must be inaccurate even if there be one accurate explanation amongst them.

In criticism we may commence with the philosophical argument which will be sufficient for many—an effect cannot rise above its cause and a thing which has so taken hold of the whole human race as to allow him to be defined as a religious animal, cannot have had so humble an origin. In fact if animism is the explanation then there is

no such thing as true religion—to many that conclusion may appear to be an absurdity. Then there is the objection alluded to in the previous Chapter III where the matter was mentioned, that this and other theories start by postulating a race utterly ignorant of any conception of a god. There is no shred of historical or ethnological evidence for any such race. Again it is founded on the idea of such things as spirits, but there are primitive races such as the Andamanese, the Bushmen and the Australians who have no idea of any such thing as a spirit. They could not have arrived at their ideas of a divinity—which they in fact possess—in this way.

It may be argued that they were taught their ideas by a people who had arrived at them in that way. In reply to which it may be said that any such idea is a pure assumption for which there is no kind of evidence. It will be noticed that ancestor-worship forms a link in the chain described. But there are many races who know not this form of worship and it was apparently also unknown to prehistoric man, points already elaborated in the last chapter which militate against the theory.

But the final blow is dealt by the fact that many primitive races do not look upon God as a spirit at all but as a super-man—a natural anthropomorphic idea for, even for ourselves, it is impossible to form an adequate or indeed any idea of

what a spirit really is. Thus the Australians regard their Supreme Being as a great black man afar off. His invisibility is not due to His spiritual nature but to his remoteness. The criticisms just enumerated dispose of the animistic theory but in fairness to that very great man Tylor, it must be added that many of the facts just detailed were not known to him.

It is now time to consider how the idea of the soul did arise. Schmidt maintains with justice that the evolution of the concept of spirit is by no means in all respects identical with religious evolution but on the contrary is a "profane," metaphysical, psychological matter. And he quotes Schell: "it is evident that by the soul has always been understood something quite different from the breath, vital warmth, that interior fire which is felt when sensual feelings arise. It is something quite different from the ideas of a dream, the shadow, or the image in the mirror. Even if all these vital phenomena are cumulated they are insufficient to produce the idea of the soul. There was no need to take any roundabout path to discover it for without breath, warmth, dream, shadow, mirror image every man knows and has always known that there is something internal and living, persistent and invincible which perceives, judges, questions and doubts, feels and wishes, loves and hates, fears and hopes, determines and is determined, in which all that he feels is concen-

trated and from which proceeds all that he does and all that he wishes." And he continues that the various things just mentioned do not lead him to the idea but help to bring by comparison his external and internal experiences into a sort of harmony.

After all it is often possible to overlook the real explanation just because it stares one in the face. As Lowie and Marett have both noted, the very fact of the difference between a living and a dead body is or ought to be enough to direct man's thoughts towards this solution.

At one moment full of life, vigour, ambition and desire, the next all that is gone, as the result of the well directed arrow of an enemy. Primitive man was quite capable of arguing that something had disappeared which accounted for the change. The same thing happens in the case of a dog? Certainly—the Scholastic Philosophy will tell you that the dog has a soul or to use the technical term "*Anima*" but that it is an *anima sensitiva* and not *rationalis*. Yet it is the master of the bodily energies. And it is just here that the answer is to be found to those very superficial critics of Dr. Marett who objected that a dog is not affected by the sight of a dead dog. Dr. Marett says that is because he is a dog. The Scholastic says it is because he has a different kind of *anima* and both mean the same thing though

the scientist perhaps would not say Amen to the philosopher.

The primitive races have not by any means always confined themselves to the idea that man has but one soul. Petrie tells us that the Egyptians enumerated several entities in man; the *Ka*-soul, the *Aakhu*-spirit, the *Ab*-heart, the *Ba*-soul, the *Khaib*-shadow, and the *Sekhem*-power. It would appear that three at least of these enter into the modern conception of the soul as far as their significances can be understood and it is interesting to note that the shadow suggested as an idea provocative of that of the soul is here looked upon as a separate appurtenance. Amongst less advanced races than the ancient Egyptians the number of souls allotted to a man, when that number exceeds one, varies from two or three—the commonest number—to as many as seven amongst the Battaks of northern Sumatra.

It is now time to turn to the other aspect of animism that of nature-worship and there it is unquestioned and almost universal outside countries where monotheism reigns. For example, of the vast numbers credited to Buddhism in manuals of statistics, we shall yet see that an overwhelming majority are really animists in this sense of the word.

Moreover, though it does not figure as the origin of religion, it goes back as far as we can go back with any safety. Andrew Lang, who was



pleased to describe himself as a "belletristic trifler" though really a very widely read ethnologist and an exceedingly acute critic, sang of Primitive man in the well-known Ballade previously the subject of quotation:

"He worshipped the rain and the breeze,  
He worshipped the river that flows,  
And the Dawn, and the Moon, and the trees,  
And bogies, and serpents and crows."

And many other things which the exigencies of the poem and rhyme doubtless forced the poet to omit. The whole idea revolves around the notion that there are unseen influences in all natural phenomena and even in inanimate objects (vide Hamlet passim, "the quotation is somewhat musty"). When the Romans dedicated altars "Genio Loci" or "Nymphis et Fontibus" this was the idea in their minds.

Man confers, for example, his own attributes on animals, much as Mr. Kipling does in the Jungle Books, but with real belief and with the idea that the animals have the mysterious power of Mana and can help or thwart him; can even become godlets as in Egypt where every nome had its sacred animal, crocodile, or whatever it might be. Man worshipped stones and does so still, that is he worshipped, as he would tell you, not the stone itself but some spirit more or less fo-

cussed in that stone. The point is taken by St. Augustine of Hippo centuries ago when dealing with the adoration of images by Catholics, a point yet to be dealt with. Stone worship went on in Christianised countries, for people are with difficulty divested of superstitious beliefs, and there is extant a canon of an early Church Council held at Nantes in Brittany ordering that "the stones which are venerated by diabolical delusion in woods and ruinous places where vows are made and paid, shall be dug up, and thrown into places where it will be impossible to discover them." It will be remembered that Brittany is the place *par excellence* where the great stone monuments of the early inhabitants are to be found and some of them have been provided with the emblem of the cross in much later days as if to drive away the superstitious ideas which attached to them. In all these cases as Jevons puts it "man projects his own personality into external nature—whilst in religion he is increasingly impressed by the divine personality."

The worship of the heavenly bodies and of the earth are of course nature worship but of too great importance to be discussed under the head of animism: they will be dealt with in subsequent chapters in their proper places. And there will be more to be said on this matter too when we come to the subject of fetishism.

## CHAPTER XI

### MAGIC—FETISHISM

MAGIC, according to the opinion of some, under the leadership of Frazer, is the origin of religion; in this book it will be discussed not by any means as the starting-point but as one of several diseases which attack religion and the reasons for that attitude will shortly appear.

Magic in the broadest sense is the use of some formula or method by means of which some unwilling deity or superior power may be coerced into carrying out the wishes of the maker of the magic. Let us remember that in the majority of cases, perhaps in all, the magical practices are not designed to coerce a Supreme Being but some spirit, or minor deity. Thus throughout the entire extent of the vast Bantu country in Africa nowhere is it believed that God can be affected by magic. It is to spirits and *genii* that it is applied. Of course in many cases this depends upon the idea of an absent and inattentive deity. If the Maker of man has abandoned all interest in his creatures and left them to the tender mercies of an infinity

of lesser powers it is these powers which it behoves man to try to get on his side. It may be done by supplication, but if not, as will be shown at a later point, there is magic. Further it must be borne in mind that the germ of magic lies in many cases in the fact that it is the applied science of the savage. The basis of all metaphysics is that we live in a rational, orderly universe, where effect follows cause. We need not discuss these data for without them science cannot exist nor any knowledge on any point be achievable and so we all accept them. So does the savage but he is apt to get his premisses wrong. Medicine and magic both try to control groups of natural phenomena known as diseases. The savage thinks them due, for example, to the presence of an evil spirit in the body and his medicine-man endeavours to expel that spirit by terrifying him by the noise of his magic rattle; the modern physician, acting from a quite different premiss, considers that the tiresome invader is a bacillus of some kind and seeks its abolition by the appropriate serum. An incident will illustrate what is meant. The chief of some Pacific island broke his shin over the fluke of a ship's anchor, which had been fixed some distance up the beach; inflammatory trouble set in and he died. From that time every native who passed the anchor saluted it with the utmost reverence. The idea is clear from the animistic point of view—there is a spirit in that anchor of

immense and deadly *mana*, better be polite to it so that one may be let alone.

So-called sympathetic magic is at the bottom of a great deal of the question. Like to like. No one has ever sailed for any length of time on a yacht, not having auxiliary power, but has heard the sailors whistling for a wind and probably joined in with them himself. That is sympathetic magic.

The current of air set up by the whistling will induce other and stronger currents, in a word a breeze. The savage does it by shaking a blanket so as to cause a current of wind; the idea is just the same. There was a sympathetic medicine theory which ordered the anointing with some healing unguent, not of the wound but of the blade of the sword that had made it. One gets the same idea even in Bacon where he says (in his "Natural History") that a wooden arrow i.e. one with no other point than its own, will penetrate further into wood than one with an iron head because of the similarity of substance. How strange to think that the presumed father of experimental science should never have thought it worth while to try whether it did or not. Of course there are rain ceremonials to benefit the general public and other such businesses but taking it generally it is fair to say that whilst religion has always public ceremonies (of course with private exercises also) magic on the whole is a pri-

vate matter. And it is of two very distinct kinds. There is the White kind which is to work a benefit for oneself or another and there is the Black, the object of which is to injure another. Where the state interests itself in the subject of magic as it does amongst savage peoples, and did in Great Britain and North America up to a recent date, it does not interfere with White magic but it does with Black. A recent account of the ideas of the Lango, a Nilotic people, affords a good instance of this distinction. Black magic is the use of the hair or nails of the victim in order to injure him, a custom by the way world-wide, and any wizard convicted of this or like practices is clubbed to death and his body is burnt. But on the other hand songs and dances are employed to obtain rain, and water is thrown up into the air—the sympathetic touch again,—whilst other magical observances are carried out to promote a good harvest.

Of Black Magic one example may be discussed in some detail and that is the world wide *Corp Craidhe*. That term means earthen body in Irish and applies to a method of hurting another known the world over. Prepare a small figure of clay, or better still of wax to represent the person you want to injure. Injure the figure and the same kind of misfortune will befall him whom it represents. In the old Irish days when the term came into use it was a clay figure as it was with

the Greeks in the time of Plato, with the men of Akkad in remote antiquity and with the inhabitants of the Barbadoes to-day or perhaps it may now be yesterday. Readers of Dumas père will not fail to remember the manufacture of the wax figure crowned to represent the king described in *La Reine Margot*. There is a very detailed account of how the people of Coventry in 1323 tried to get rid of the Prior who, as their landlord, had annoyed them, by just this kind of magic. Wax figures were used. A trial was first made on the Prior's servant. A bodkin was driven into the head of his image, whereupon he promptly went mad. A day or two later, the bodkin was thrust into the cardiac region of the figure, the result being the death of the unhappy victim. The account cannot further be pursued nor the case as heard in the civil courts. "It is not wax that I am scorching, it is the liver, heart and spleen of So-and-so that I scorch" was the explanation of a Malayan of Mr. Skeat. One last example to show the wide distribution in time and area of this custom. In a collection of tales relating to miraculous occurrences got together in India in A.D. 1530 it is recorded that one Shaykhul-Islam Faridu'd—Din Mas'ud, who died in 1265 A.D. once suffered from a severe illness. It was revealed to his son in a dream that the secret cause lay with a certain sorcerer and eventually there was found a figure

made of flour into which some needles were stuck, on which were knotted hairs from a horse's tail. When the needles had been withdrawn from this and the horses' hairs unknotted the sheik was well.

Dr. Rivers, who minutely investigated these matters, shows that in the Pacific islands there are three ways in which sorcerers claim to produce illness. In the first some morbid object or substance is projected into the body, stones, crystals and so on. They are not of course actually projected but are believed to have been and to be responsible for the ailment. Or again a "ghost-shooter" may be employed. This is a piece of bamboo in which have been placed leaves, bits of dead men's bones and other objects. The sorcerer keeps his thumb over the open end of this until his victim is in sight and then removes it so that the evil influences may penetrate his system. Of course in communities where this belief exists there are those skilled in sucking out the stone or whatever it may be and, as a result of the operation, a stone is always exhibited which has thus been skilfully removed.

The second method is that in which something is abstracted from the body e.g. kidney or omentum fat in Australia and the soul in some of the islands. The third form is sympathetic magic where some part of the body—hair or nails—is acted upon with the idea that a general effect will



be produced upon the victim. Of course all these form parts of an elaborate network of sorcerers and anti-sorcerers so to speak and start from the first principles of the savage as to the causes of illness. Le Roy states that in Central Africa illness (and of course death) it is thought may be due in the first place to the action of God. Then there is nothing more to be said or done, because nothing can be done and besides God made the man and gave him life and has the right to take it away. In the second place it may be due to an offended spirit in which case reparation must be made and reconciliation effected by sacrifice which consequently is carried out. But lastly it may be due to a man i.e. sorcery and then different action is taken. The sorcerer concerned must be tracked down and, if discovered, punished. And on this follow ordeals and many other matters which cannot be pursued here. Many will say that all this has little if anything to do with religion, and indeed it is far enough off from any true conception of religion, yet there are collective forms of magic which are a parody at least—at times a wilful and blasphemous parody—of religion. And to dispose of the latter and most disgusting phase once for all there is an avowed worship of Satan coupled with a blasphemous parody of the most sacred ceremony of the Catholic Church, said—it is understood correctly—to be carried out by decadents of the most sophis-

ticated type in Paris and elsewhere. Of course that is almost a case of mania but it is an extreme instance of what was certainly attempted in the Sabbaths of the witches. No doubt there was vast exaggeration in the whole witch business and many unfortunate and innocent though hysterical women went to the stake in times of excitement such as those of Salem in the days of Cotton Mather. But that actual worship of Satan was carried out there seems no reason to doubt. It is certainly a remarkable fact that, as Mr. Spence points out, there is an extraordinary correspondence between the witch stories of Scotland and of ancient Mexico. His picture of Tlazoteotl, the queen of the Mexican witches riding nude on a broomstick, might almost pass for Burns' "Cutty Sark" but that there is no sark. "We find in ancient Mexico, as in Europe, a feminine cult connected with the worship of a fertility deity, whose ministers fly through the air on broomsticks, and, like the witches of Europe, smear themselves with ointments to assist levitation. Their queen or tutelary deity, is depicted as nude, and bestriding a broom, and as wearing the traditional hat of bark." These things are a tolerably obvious perversion of religion; in fact a morbid process. But it has been argued that in magic we are to look for the actual origin of religion and that in the writer's opinion is simply to put the cart before the horse. That is the opinion.

also of others whose dictum is more important than his. Dr. Marett sums up Sir James Frazer's idea as it shapes itself to him—and I suppose to other of his readers—Magic came first and when it was found to fail then as a *dernier resort* man turned to religion. What seems the simpler and more common sense explanation is that man began as a suppliant—it is the natural attitude face to face with superior powers. He did not always get what he wanted and then in his disappointment and wrath he turns round and exclaims: "Acheronta movebo!" "I will make you give it to me" and that is magic or the intention of magic which has been said is "everywhere and at every time the black shadow of religion" and is its eternal enemy. Let us apply our historical test here again. There is no known nation which practises magic alone, yet if it had inaugurated religion one might have supposed that at least one example might have been found on the bottom rung of the ladder. Professor Giles says that, having investigated the question of religion in China, he finds no evidence for the preëxistence of magic to religion and, as we have seen religion—the worship of one God—goes back to great antiquity with that nation. There is again the argument mentioned in connection with animism that a position of preliminary atheism must be postulated. There is the philosophical impossibility of religion with its cravings after

purity, holiness and perfection of life having originated in the operations of sorcerers and medicine-men such as those we have been contemplating in the past few pages. In fact I heartily coincide with Lowie's judgment: "I cannot concede to Frazer's scheme the slightest basis: it seems to me to misrepresent grossly the psychological situation, while its historical contentions are equally devoid of validity." Before leaving this section of the subject it may be well to deal with another point often brought up and that is the introduction of magic early (and late too, for that matter) into the Christian Church. I do not speak of those who so describe the Sacrifice of the Mass, as Catholics and the orthodox Greeks call it, for obviously those persons are grossly ignorant of what they are talking or writing about, and that is a fact, whatever view one may take of the doctrine in question. But there are a number of other things such as holy wells, holy water and so on which suggest pagan practices of a magical character. Take the Lustrations of the Romans. Warde Fowler, whose word concerning Roman religion is as final as word can be, says: "These very processions of *lustratio*, which had been once metamorphosed in an animistic period, were seized upon by the Roman Church with characteristic adroitness, adapted to its ritual, and given a new meaning; and the Catholic priest still leads his flock round the fields with the prayers of the

*Litania major* in Rogation week, begging a blessing on the flocks and herds, and deprecating the anger of the Almighty." No one denies the capture and employment of many pagan places and practices, for Theodosius gave orders that heathen temples might be employed for Christian worship after purificatory ceremonies had taken place in them. Mr. Mallock, I think, somewhere pictures the early Christian Church as a figure on a rock in the midst of a welter of water on which float the wreckage of many forms of religion. Most of these fragments are allowed to float by, but every now and then something passes which looks as if it might be utilised and it is picked up and fitted into the edifice. No doubt there was the laudable idea of making things as easy as they could be made for the pagan convert where no principle was at stake. That was perhaps the idea which led to the choice of December 25th the *Dies Solis Invicti* for the keeping of the Nativity of our Lord. Warde Fowler gives the real answer to the implied suggestion beneath the allegation with which we are concerned at the moment. "It is easy" he writes "to find magical processes even in Christian worship, if we have the will to do so; but if we steadily bear in mind that the true test of magic is not the nature of act, but the intent or volition which accompanies it, the search will not be an easy one." Fowler does not advert to the fact but none the less his is

the argument which was put forward many centuries before by Origen when discussing such measures as circumcision, food restrictions and the like as practised by the Jews and other races. It is the intention, he says, which distinguishes the act of a man from that of a machine or even an animal; it is the soul of the act. So to circumcise from a perfectly different motive is not to practise the same circumcision however identical the act may be. In fact the heart of the whole question is here touched upon by Fowler. The intention of religion is to bow before the superior holiness, greatness and power of God. That of magic is a revolt against God—the sin of pride and when one looks at the question from that, to me the only tenable point of view, it becomes quite impossible to suppose that magic can have been the origin of religion.

Very closely allied with the subject of magic is that of Fetishism “the very last stage in the downward course of religion” as Max Müller called it and that must now be considered. It is very widespread but best studied amongst the African tribes and here let us note the remarkable fact that, as Le Roy points out, magic and especially this variant “with its plagues, anthropophagy, infanticide, and poisoning are not so much found amongst the primitives as amongst races dominating others by superior political organisation.” The writer just quoted is alluding to con-

ditions in Africa but the reader will probably be reminded of the statements made in Chapter V as to the horrible practices of other comparatively high civilisations which also "dominated others by superior political organisation" and again reflect that "progress" is not always a thing easy of definition.

The fetish may be almost any kind of object, a stone, a root, a feather, a bit of metal, or very commonly a more or less rudely carved figure. Thus the fetish Bwiti, well-known in the regions of Gabon and Loango is a stick roughly carved to represent the human body. Pieces of glass form the eyes and at the navel is a bit of looking-glass into which the sorcerer looks to ascertain the truth. Le Roy says that in Africa fetishes are emblematic of such-and-such spirits and exercise their influence in various ways. There are family fetishes which owe their power to relics of ancestors and exercise a protective influence over the family and here we are on the verge of ancestor-worship or concerned with a special variety of it. Secondly, there are fetishes of tutelary genii incorporating spirits of a benevolent and protective character. These may be provided for a village and the village fetish is a common sight in Africa. Bwiti, for example, "is placed in a decorated niche in the interior of a little hut which has no other opening than a door. A fire, which, they say, must never go out, is fed by

three big logs renewed by the sorcerer. A little path leads from this hut to a clearing in the forest where the initiated assemble." (Le Roy) Finally there are the bewitching or avenging fetishes which are associated with the horrible practices of voodoo. Tylor, writing at a time when knowledge of the subject was much more limited than to-day thought that there was always an incorporated spirit in the fetish but, as Lowie very properly points out, that is not so. Whatever the object be it must go through the hands of the sorcerer and be ritually consecrated before it has any power as a fetish and that consecration often consists in the application of some magical substance e.g. some kind of grease which is smeared on. Moreover the power may be cancelled by the removing of the consecrating substance. There are a number of "nail fetishes" known in Africa, wooden objects into which nails are driven, much as they were into the wooden Hindenburg during the war, for the purpose apparently of liberating the power of the fetish against an enemy. A description of one of these from the Loango district will give a clear idea of the character of these objects. The figure, about 32 inches high, represents a man standing with the left hand resting on the hip, the right raised as if to throw a spear or inflict a blow with a bush knife. The top of the head was covered with a cap of hardened paste and this paste, which was



made of a variety of materials, some at least of them usually poisonous, was that which imparted or embodied the fetish power.

Sometimes, instead of being incorporated with such a cap the consecrating substance was enclosed in a kind of little casket and hung over the chest or abdomen of the figure. Of course in the case of a feather, stone or other such object the consecrating paste was merely smeared on to it.

The fetish naturally leads up to the question of "Idols."

"The heathen in his blindness  
Bows down to wood and stone."

I quote from memory a hymn which I used to hear years ago. But does he? What is an idol? Etymologically a representation of anything, but that sense is quite obsolete and the secondary sense given by the Century Dictionary is that of a representation of a deity. That is not the popular idea which is that the worshipper believes that the very object before which he bows down is in fact the potent actual thing from which he hopes to obtain a favour. In that sense is there any such thing as an idol? Has there ever been such a thing? If the black stone brought from Pessinus to Rome B.C. 204, was, as Professor Gilbert Murray thinks it was, believed to be actually the Mother Goddess come down from

heaven in the shape of a meteorite (for such this stone was) then there we have a real idol, but where is there another such? It is worth while looking into this question a little closely for a good deal of the psychology of religion is contained in it. Amongst Christian bodies the Greek Orthodox Church permits only ikons or painted representations of holy persons in her churches; the Catholic Church, as is well known, permits the use of statues, carved or cast and both these bodies have been called idolatrous a thousand times by members of Protestant Churches, which tolerate neither form of representation. The reply always made is that in no sense does the worshipper pray to the image or ikon which to him is merely the reminder of some holy person long since dead whose intercession he seeks. But that is precisely what the Pagan claims. Take the high water-mark of the pagan attitude as expressed by Maximus Tyrius, in the second century after Christ it is true, but the utterance is that of an educated Pagan. "God is the Father and Creator of the things that are, older than the sun, older than the heaven, master of time and eternity and of all changing Nature. To Him law cannot give a name, nor can voice describe Him, nor eye behold Him. It is because we are not able to apprehend His being that we lean upon words, and names, and animal forms, and representations of gold and ivory and silver, and plants and rivers,

and mountain tops and groves. Craving for knowledge of Him, in our weakness we give to earthly things the name of good and beautiful from His nature. It is like the case of lovers to whose sight the representations of their beloved give most pleasure, and pleasure too is given by a lyre of his, a javelin, a chair, a walk and, in short, everything which wakens the memory of the loved one." It may be well understood that in the early days of Christianity there was much argument on this very point. The Christians had their effigies in the Catacombs, yet they accused the pagans of worshipping inanimate objects. There is a celebrated dialogue of St. Augustine with an imaginary pagan where the accusation is made, with the retort from the pagan that he does not worship the image but what it represents. The reply of the saint was that that did not help him for what he worshipped was a demon. That in fact, as Professor Halliday—to whom I am indebted for the lengthy quotation above—points out, was the regular response to the accusation of the Christian apologist. It could not be supposed to be a convincing reply to the pagan and then who was to decide? But one thing is clear; in the strict sense of the word as defined above neither was an idolater, neither the man who adored the statue of Zeus at Olympia nor he who bowed his knee before the representation of the Blessed Virgin in the Catacombs. For neither of them re-

garded the representation as anything more than a representation, "just as we may have and constantly look at and even show every mark of affection for the representation of some one loved and dead. Of course that is the psychological attitude of the educated and perhaps the ill—or still more un-educated might think less clearly. I once asked a friend who had spent much time amongst the natives in the Papuan regions what the real idea of the natives was as to the sacred stones which they placed in their yam plantations to ward off evil from the crops. His reply was that, as they were not psychologists, the probability was that they did not carefully distinguish, but that, in a general way, they had an idea that some deity or sacred influence was focussed in the stone. That is what the fetish user thinks but he believes that the focussing process is due to the sacred paste which has been concocted by the medicine-man. He knows that the figure, which he probably carved himself, is nothing, and is the more assured of that by also believing that its magical influences can be at once abolished by taking off the sacred cap or the little casket. Here again the savage in the strict sense of the word cannot be called an idolater for the feather or image is not a god though it is possessed of supernatural powers. It has magic power and can exercise it but that is not quite the same thing. The point is a very nice one and of course the whole question

is complicated by the fact that the vast majority of persons who follow different beliefs do not spend much time in inquiring into them. However, it seemed worth while to discuss the point if only the purpose of bringing out what the religious pagan really thought, and of course it is absurd to suppose that there were not many such persons. Look at the inscriptions found in Britain recording the purification of pagan temples and their restoration to their pristine purpose after they had been defiled by Christian worship. It is as much the other side of the shield as the tales in the Thousand Nights and a Night where the pure and chaste Saracen maiden is the prey of the licentious Christian knight who is eventually worsted by his Moslem opponent.

Such episodes and stories are valuable because they give us that priceless piece of knowledge—what the other man thinks. That is what we ought to endeavour to discover in religious matters instead, as too many do, of contenting ourselves with what we think that he thinks, which is often, indeed usually, quite inaccurate.

The fetish must be distinguished from two other objects the first of which is the gri-gri of Africa, the amulet or, as it is fashionable to call it to-day, the mascot. This is something carried on the person which is not inhabited by a spirit nor imbued with the fetish power by a sorcerer, but none the less has a secret, innate and uncon-

scious power. The negroes of the United States and the West Indies, those of the uneducated groups, go in terror of voodoo, already alluded to and wear amulets to protect themselves against the operations of that form of sorcery. One amulet, exhibited at Washington, consists of a chicken feather, some human hair, a drop of blood on a rag and a sliver of pine. An object very close to a fetish, but not, described as ritually consecrated as such, and so technically an amulet. The *bullæ* worn by all Roman children, and, if the parents could afford it, made of gold, was no doubt originally an amulet, though in the process of time it came to be looked upon as no more than a mark of childhood. It was hung round the neck and connected with the idea, according to Warde Fowler, that "children were in some sense sacred and at the same time that they needed special protection against the all-abounding evil influences to be met with in daily life." Thousands of such things are carried about by persons even to-day not to speak of on their automobiles and quite frequently by individuals whose religious affiliations appear to be just nil. There is not a priest and religion hating Italian who has not got about him a charm against the evil eye for example, and numbers of people who could not tell you who St. Christopher was nor have the remotest belief in his intercession or that of any other saint, still have a medal representing that saint and call-

ing on him for protection affixed to their cars. That is pure superstition of the worst type and quite a different matter from the same practice when carried out by persons amongst whose religious tenets is that of the intercession of the saints. It is again a question of the intention.

Then lastly there is the Talisman, called by the Greeks Telesma and by the Arabs Tilsam. This is not an object carried about but put over a door for example, and in early days commonly marked with cabalistic signs. The horse-shoe which one often sees hung over a door (in England at any rate) is of this class, though it has no cabalistic signs attached. It is supposed to bring good luck and represents in itself the sacred metal of antiquity—iron; the sacred animal—the horse; and, when properly placed with the prongs up, also represents the horns, that potent sign against the evil eye. If it is put up the other way, as it often is, with the prongs down, any gypsy will tell you that it is a pressing invitation to any evil spirit in the neighborhood to enter. When these things came into being and got their names there were no automobiles and so to-day, when there are, we have the travelling amulets or talismans which are attached to cars. Billikin or a black cat or any one of a host of other things all supposed to bring good luck and ward off collisions and all in reality belonging to the lower end of magic.

## CHAPTER XII

### MYTHOLOGY

A VAST battle-field scene of many a combat must now be surveyed as fully as space permits. The great difficulty is properly to estimate the stand-points of the different combatants and thus give a clear idea of what is meant by mythology and what different authorities feel as to its significance and explanation. A collection of tales—such is mythology—but not all tales fairly come within its purview. In Melanesia—and elsewhere too—as Malinowski shows, there are three classes of tales, purely fanciful tales with no other purpose than to pass away the time and divert the mind; “serious statements to satisfy social ambition” and the third—truly myths—regarded as venerable and sacred and playing a highly important cultural part. Probably everybody would agree with this classification, perhaps with some reservations as to the border lines between the last two. But it is the explanation of the last—the true mythology—where difference of opinion appears. There is still a school of nature-mythology which at one time flourished exceedingly in



Germany which maintains that primitive man made his mythology from natural phenomena but just how that was done brings up further differences of opinion, some holding that everything must be referred back to solar, others to lunar factors; others to meteorological phenomena, wind and weather; others to vegetation and growth and so on. That kind of explanation has its supporters but is much discredited to-day outside its native land. Then there is the historical attitude, very much to the fore in America, which regards myths as actual and true, if distorted tales of the past. That is no doubt a natural revulsion from the old idea of complete distrust of tradition. The rational view of such persons as King Arthur and other racial heroes is that behind these figures—perhaps a long way behind—there is a real person. Take as an example St. Brendan “Brendan the Navigator” of Kerry. An historical person 484-577 A. D. who certainly made voyages; may possibly have reached the shores of America; but assuredly did not hold religious services on a whale’s back as he is represented as doing in pictures on old maps, nor find a green tree growing up from the centre of the ocean, nor talk with Judas Iscariot sitting on an iceberg, nor was he the hero of scores of other wonders attached to his name in the numerous *Vitæ Sci. Brendani*. We have lost the historic Artorius or whatever his name may have been; we have kept

the historic Brendan; and we have the legends of both. But whilst agreeing that there is a great deal in the teaching of this school are we sure that it exhausts the content of the question? Malinowski thinks not and I agree with that view. Also with his view that the psychoanalytical explanation which refers mythologies to some dark period of the human race when it may be supposed to have had a kind of common unconscious self is a most unsatisfying explanation. Having briefly indicated these various attitudes towards the subject let us look further into the subject from the standpoint of Andrew Lang in his various writings on this subject supplemented by the still larger granaries of Sir James Frazer. What is the relation of myth to religion? That is a question of primary importance and the answer is that it is not religion nor was it the origin of religion; nor was it to religion in its early days what dogma is to religion to-day. That has been suggested but that is an obvious fallacy having regard to the fact that a dogma is a summing up of religious knowledge on some definite point. Nor again was it the invention of a priesthood any more than religion was—either of which ideas is a putting of the cart before the horse. Jevons describes it as “one of the spheres of human activity in which religion may manifest itself, one of the departments of human activity which religion may penetrate, suf-

fuse and inspire." But the incrustation of religion by myth is a danger to the former. That, as Jevons points out is why there is poverty of myth in the Bible for that would be contrary to its purpose. On the other hand there is much devotional poetry giving opportunity for exercise of the imagination. It is a controverted point but many hold the view that mythology is the science and philosophy as well as the history of early man. He finds himself constantly asking "How?" How did the earth come into being? How did man make his appearance? and so in other matters innumerable—why is there a dark patch on the moon? Why have rabbits got white underparts to their tails, and why are they short whilst that of the fox is long and waving?

Man's insatiable curiosity—the source of all advances in civilization—causes him to ask the questions and his vivid imagination often supplies the answers. How does he arrive at the particular answer? That is a question not commonly easy to answer. Turn to another point. We can clearly divide myths into two classes. There are those which are rational and beautiful. When we are told that the roseate hues of early dawn are the fingers of the beautiful Eos, we are at least introduced to a charming tale as we are when we read of Diana chaste and fair, the maiden huntress. When we look at the reconstruction of the statue of Zeus attributed to Phidias, we seem to be in

the presence of one who might really be called the father of gods and men. But in contradistinction to these graceful legends there are a whole group of others. The maiden attendants of Artemis—Diana under another name—dance bear-dances of a thoroughly vulgar character and ~~Zeus~~ plays base tricks on unsuspecting women and comports himself as no respectable human being would do. As already suggested, in an earlier chapter, ~~one~~ must not forget the atmosphere of the time. Lane in his introduction to the Arabian Nights points out that those who were responsible for those stories lived at a time when no one doubted the existence of Djinns and mythical beings of that kind. When we read Mr. Anstey's "Brass Bottle" or Meredith's "Shaving of Shagpat" we do so for pure pleasure and without for a moment believing in the doings on the top of St. Paul's Cathedral or the marvellous works of the lovely Noorna-bin-Noorka. But the people for whom the Arabian Nights were composed would have had no kind of difficulty in absorbing the latter story and would only have been puzzled by the modern parts in the former. Max Müller thought that the very fact that many languages—to the intense troublings of those who have to learn them—have genders, sometimes very eccentric, points to the conclusion that when they came into existence people believed in the animate character of the objects thus endowed with mas-

culinity or femininity. And, at a time when philology seemed a more satisfying explanation than it is to-day, what was called a disease of language was held to account for many myths, an interesting if now discarded explanation which urged e.g., that if you could show that Athene—the name—was derived from the Sanskrit word *Ahana*, meaning the dawn, then anything which you could predicate of the dawn could also be predicated of the goddess.

It was amongst people of a certain cast of mind that myths appeared. They found no difficulty in believing, as plenty of primitive folk do to-day that men could turn into wolves or leopards and back again and witches into hares or cats and also back again. If you think that the wind is a person, why might you not see him, like Lang's "respectable Bushman" who "once saw the wind at Harfontein?" And why not believe in the doings of Boreas and his brethren even if not always quite respectable? The north wind in its buffetings is certainly not always respectful. The idea is old enough, for, five centuries before Christ, Theagenes claimed that the gods and goddesses were personifications of natural objects—the solar myth theory of an early age as Euhemerus' explanation that they had all once been human beings, later on deified by popular opinion, was the historical theory of the time at which he lived (circa 300 B. C.).

An instance or two will illustrate the question of myth and afford opportunity for further discussion of some of the issues arising.

Every race of mankind has asked the question—where did man come from? It is an obvious enquiry, and every race has answered it in one way or another. Sometimes it is held that he came up out of the earth through a hole in the ground or just simply emerged from the soil and often the exact spot where he appeared is pointed out. Or he was the fruit of a tree and the Ovaherero in Africa point out or pointed out fifty years ago the very tree from which mankind originated. Or he came from some animal of which more when the topic Totemism is under consideration. Or, in quite a long list of cases, he was fashioned by his Maker from clay, as by Pund-Jel in Central Australia. In New Zealand Tiki was the deity who took clay and moistening it with his own blood moulded it into man. In Melanesia man was made out of red clay taken from the marshy side of Vanua Levu, but on the other hand woman was made of willow twigs by Qat. In quite another part of the world—in ancient Greece—men were figures made of clay and baked by Prometheus. There is no reason for supposing that in any of these cases there is any suggestion that the Biblical account may have come to the knowledge of the peoples enumerated, in fact it could not have done so in the last instance. The Biblical account speaks

of the making of man from the dust of the earth or the slime of the earth, according to the two chief translations, but what exactly is meant by that does not seem perfectly clear save that St. Augustine of Hippo warns us against supposing that the Creator with corporeal hands modelled a figure of clay which he says would be "*cogitatio nimis puerilis*"—too childish a suggestion.

Let us turn to a totally different question. What is the cause of the dark patch on the face of the moon? The old story that we were told as children, but not as a tale to be believed, was that it was the Man in the Moon who was sent there because he was discovered picking a bundle of sticks on Sunday, which cannot be a very ancient legend. The Khasias offer quite a different explanation. The moon was a man who had the audacity on one occasion to talk to his mother-in-law, a dreadful thing to do according to their—and other—codes of Tabus. The lady was so much annoyed at this breach of good manners that she threw a bucket of ashes in his face and there they are to this day. There is another group of explanations with a family link between them. In Mexico it is said that the mark is that of the place where some god struck the moon with a rabbit because it tried to outshine the sun. In Zululand and again in Thibet the mark is that of a hare—no very dissimilar beast—sometimes a good hare, sometimes a bad one, according to the variants of the

tale. We get a clue to one origin at least of this myth in Mr. Jacobs' elucidation of the story of the Tar-Baby well known to everybody. That tale is a variant of a story known in the English books as "The Demon with the Matted Locks" and that is one of the Jatakas or Buddha birth tales of which more in another chapter. But how did Buddha come to be mixed up with Brer Rabbit? In this way. In another Jataka it is narrated that the Bodhisat, having encountered by the roadside a starving man and having no food to give him, lit a fire, turned himself into a hare, and cooked himself so that the tramp might have a dinner, for which sublime act of self-abnegation the figure of a hare was placed in the moon to remind all good Buddhists of their founder's altruism. Buddhism was at one time a highly missionary religion and the tales of Buddha must have been brought to many a place and often distorted and after all the change from rabbit to hare is but a small one zoologically. That would account for Uncle Remus through Buddhist missionaries to the home of his African ancestors but not for the Mexican tale which remains an unexplained member of the group unless we postulate the by no means impossible Buddhist missionary to America whose existence seems to be more than hinted at by the formerly existent sacred dragon once inscribed on the rocks at Alton, Ill., a fairly obvious piece of Chinese handicraft.



Where did the waters come from? Another question with an interesting answer and a difficulty connected therewith. Fr. Paul Le Jeune, a Jesuit missionary to the Hurons gives their explanation, obviously original and genuine in 1636 when he wrote. Ioskeha the maker of mankind slew a huge frog which had swallowed all the waters there were in order that the newly arrived human beings might perish of thirst. His death restored the waters which arranged themselves into seas, lakes and rivers. .

Far away in Australia there is a similar story of a water swallowing frog which was caused to disgorge its contents by a violent fit of laughter provoked by the antics of those who hoped by this means to cause a restitution of their purloined rivers and lakes. The very primitive Andamanese have a similar tale about a toad—not far from a frog—which swallowed all the waters to annoy and destroy mankind. His malice was the undoing of his scheme for he danced so wildly in glee at man's distress as to bring on a vomiting fit which restored the stolen waters. And to this list the conflict of Indra with Vritta a dragon who had swallowed the waters, as detailed in the Vedas, and we have quite a group of very similar character but belonging to widely separated places. How are we to account for them? In an early chapter of this book it was mentioned that there are those to-day who hold that no significant

cultural fact or incident was ever twice discovered, and having erected that into an axiom are, therefore, obliged to hold that all these stories had a common centre however difficult or even impossible it may be to trace their connections. Others claim, with more reason perhaps, that whilst diffusion is the commoner explanation by far, there is a residuum which cannot be explained in this way or in any way save that of independent invention. Perhaps ten per cent might be assigned to this latter category. The parable of the body and the members as we read it in the Bible is not peculiar to that book but is found in the sacred Scriptures of more than one other religion, yet there is no need to suppose that they copied one another or a common source, for the illustration is one of so natural a character as readily to suggest itself to different minds.

Mr. Spence describes the witch idea of the ancient Mexicans and shows its remarkable similarity in several quite unconnected features with that of Europe notably with that of Scotland. How is that to be accounted for? His solution is to assume the existence of an Island of Atlantis where the Sargasso Sea now is, with migrations of its people north and south carrying common legends to divers parts of the earth. Unfortunately there is no geological evidence for the Atlantis in that part of the Ocean.

Of course it may be supposed that the primitive

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horde of mankind, wherever it originated, when it broke up had a certain common stock of ideas, tales and myths, as we can feel sure was the case with the much later group of speakers of the primitive Aryan tongue. That common stock was carried to the different places to which the emigrant groups travelled, but to assign too heavy a load of common stock ideas would seem to be a case of travelling a good way beyond the record. The discussion will however call attention to one of the most discussed questions of the day in ethnological circles.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HEAVENS AND THE HEAVENLY BODIES— ASTROLOGY

TO Kant two things were sublime, the starry heavens and the moral consciousness in man and it would be hard for any man to gaze upon the deep blue of the summer sky, or on the panorama of the heavens on a clear, frosty night, without some feelings of awe. It is not, therefore, wonderful to find that at all ages these things should have aroused religious feelings in the minds of men, and that in most parts of the world. In fact what is known as the Pan-Babylonian school contends that it was out of feelings of this kind that religion grew up. The idea is a more probable one than some which have been mentioned, but must be dismissed, for, in the first place, as far as we can judge, such ideas entered little, if at all, into the minds of prehistoric races and there are a number of existing peoples who neither have nor apparently ever have had any such form of religious belief. One must, therefore, look upon it as one of the accretions to religion like others which have been discussed. We may commence our enquiry

into this branch of the subject with the familiar sky-god concerning whom Sir James Frazer has so much to say in his "Worship of Nature." There can be little if any doubt that this deity was the object of worship of the primitive Aryan-speaking peoples before their dispersion, for we have him under one name or another in the different languages. *Dyaus piter* amongst the Indians; *Zeus pater* to the Greeks; and *Jupiter* to the Romans. Again there is *Deipaturos* amongst the Illyrians and *Zeus Papaïos* of the Scythians. *Dyaus* means the heavens in Sanskrit and of the same family is the word *dies*—the day; *sub divo* i.e., under the heaven, out in the open.

Nut the Egyptian goddess of the firmament is, says Petrie, lost in the mists of antiquity so that there is no trace of a temple nor even of an amulet connected with this very ancient deity. Nut the firmament—regarded as a solid vault—was believed to have been at one time in actual contact with the earth but Shu the air intervened and reft them apart, so that Nut is represented as a curved figure, star-spangled, arched over the earth on which rest the tips of her fingers and toes. As to Zeus and Jupiter, who will be discussed in their proper places, there is this to be said, that as to their reality there was no doubt but amongst the great number of folk with a sky-god there is by no means always any kind of certainty in this respect as Frazer very clearly shows.

Is the actual sky itself the god? Is it merely the symbol of the god? Or is it no more than the place of his habitation? Quite a number of the primitive folk can give no clear reply to these questions. Not being of a very speculative turn of mind, perhaps the questions have never occurred to them. The belief in a deity a long way off from man, in the sky, is certainly held by many and, where that deity is indifferent to the fate of humanity and thus never invoked, it is likely that all ideas about him would become vague and even the point as to whether he was the sky or was in the sky fall into uncertainty. However that may be, the fact that the heavenly bodies were objects of worship is unquestioned, in fact for the ancients the heavens was a populous area, each important star or constellation was a being, each with his history, too frequently indecent so that Chesterton can remark that erotic legends were scrawled across the sky in stars. In early history, said Tylor, "the sun and moon were alive, and, as it were human in their nature," and these two bodies must first be considered. Mankind in the pastoral stage would naturally be most concerned with the Moon as the Measurer of time, for its comparatively frequent and very obvious changes in form could not but attract attention and afford a scale of time. And so we find Mên, the Measurer or Moon all over Asia Minor and traveling into Greece as Mên Turannos. Petrie be-

lieves that the moon was worshipped in Egypt before the turn of the sun came. Chensu was their moon-goddess and was represented with a disk and horns on her head just as Cleopatra is represented in a well-known glyph. Again the primitive Aryan speakers knew only Mên the Measurer; the sun was no deity of theirs until after the division into Eastern and Western groups.

Ur of the Chaldees, out of which emerged Abraham many centuries ago, was a great centre of moon-worship and much light has been thrown on the subject by the excavations which have taken place at that spot in recent years. Prior to the days of Khammurabi (circa 2250 B. C.) Babylonia had a number of civic centres, each, according to the common custom, with its own deity. One of these was Ur and its deity was Sin, the moon god, worshipped also at Barran, another city in this northern part of Babylonia. Sin is represented as an old man with flowing beard and with a crescent as his symbol. He was the chief of all the gods and the maker of all things and moreover possessed a wife and a daughter in the shape of the planet Venus, a connection easily understood when one remembers the relation between the two bodies in the heavens. There are other examples of moon-worship, Egypt as mentioned above and far away in Ceylon in the ancient and once great city of Anuradhapura the moonstone is one of

the remarkable objects amongst the many temples and symbols which that place contains.

The sun as an object of worship is of course of much greater importance and was of first interest to human beings when from a pastoral they turned to an agricultural life. The pastoral wanderer can scarcely be said to have had a home: the agriculturalist had, for he was anchored to his farm. He had, therefore, climbed to a higher rung on the social ladder, the first step of which is the family. But he had an urgent need to know how the seasons came round for the purposes of ploughing and sowing and obviously there were then no calendars to be purchased. So he must construct his own and that from the movements of the sun. The matter has been and is disputed but personally I have not the slightest doubt from my own and other investigations that a large number at least of the stone circles such as Stonehenge and the smaller ones in England and elsewhere were solar or stellar observatories, by the aid of which the agriculturalist was able to acquire the information he needed as to the passage of the seasons. Whether simultaneously or later on these places became also temples for worship is another matter, but that they did so become seems hardly doubtful, and doubtless the priests of these temples were also the persons who made the solar or stellar observations and indicated the approach of the times for the dif-



ferent operations of husbandry. In whatever way it came about the worship of the sun spread to many parts of the earth. To return to Khammurabi who in the plenitude of his power made Babylon his capital and caused its local deity Marduk, the Merodach of the Bible, to be accepted as the chief god of his great kingdom. Marduk was originally the god of the spring sun when it is obvious that it has gained a victory over the gloom of winter, and his name means "the young bull of the heavens." He had a wife named Sarpanit. Something had to be done about Sin and the other deities of other cities, and to make everything comfortable all round, these were named as dignitaries in the court of Marduk and thus a pantheon arose—a good example of one method by which polytheism may come to pass. No doubt in this case the manoeuvre was of a political character and designed to mitigate the annoyance of the inhabitants of the conquered cities at the deposition of their local deities.

Amongst these local deities were other sun-gods such as Shamash of Sippara, Ninib of Shirgulla or Lagash (also a spring-tide sun-god) and Nergal of Kutha, who was not a beneficent person like the others, but the god of the summer solstice and of burning noon who could and did cause much suffering and death. When Assyria rose to power, in that southern kingdom it was Assur, no longer Marduk, who was the chief

deity and the head of a pantheon. But as Assur also was a sun-god the position would not seem to have greatly altered. Here mention may be made of the celebrated Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the great finds in the library of Assur-hani-pal. Gilgamesh was a popular hero, quite possibly once a living man, who was turned into a god, again the god of the sun in the spring. Let us now turn to consider the long and complicated story of sun worship in Egypt. Sir Wallis Budge, a great authority on that country, at the very beginning of his book on Egyptian Religion, says that the Egyptians believed in "one God, who was self-existent, immortal, invisible, eternal, omniscient, almighty and inscrutable." He was the creator of all things and the points thus set forth Budge says must be emphasized because "the whole of his (the Egyptian's) theology was based upon it." Moreover he says that there never was a time from the earliest days down to the period of the greatest polytheism when Egypt was without this belief. Petrie on the other hand, another most eminent authority, seems to attribute the earliest worship to Osiris, stating that the worship of the sun came in later and with the second prehistoric folk. The sun was known as Ra or Re and the centre of his worship was at On in the Delta afterwards called Heliopolis by the Greeks. (To avoid confusion let it be noted that there was more than one Heliopolis.) Ra

was the solar orb but Khepera (symbolized by the scarabæus beetle) was recognized as the rising and Atum as the setting sun. There were two other noticeable sun-gods—Amen or Ammon the local god of Karnak, who came to the front under Theban influence in the XIIth dynasty, and the Winged Splendour at Edfu which absorbed the worship of Horus the son of Osiris. That worship again was fused with that of the falcon at Edfu and Hieraconpolis and thus it is that we find Ra often represented as a man with a hawk's head. Khafrê, believed to be the son of the pyramid builder Khufu, bore a name meaning "Shining of Re" an indication of the influence which had been acquired by the religion of Re and by his priests, and, after Khafrê, all Pharaohs were believed to be actually the children of the sun. Still later in Egyptian history Amen of Thebes (Amen-Ra-Horus of the Horizon) came to be looked upon as chief deity and his temple at Thebes became one of almost incredible wealth. By this time we are arrived at the reign of Amenhotep III, or Amenophis as some prefer to call him. His name signifies "Amen is satisfied" and he is the person represented in the statues called those of Memnon by the Greeks. He was married to a clever woman, of much lower birth than himself, whose name was Taia and who was perhaps a Mesopotamian. The parents are mentioned because of the very re-

markable son whom they produced who became Amenhotep IV on his father's death. Little more than a boy, he married a very beautiful woman named Nefertiti and proceeded to turn the whole religious status of his country upside down. That he, being then nineteen years of age, could do so is eloquent testimony to the power of the reigning Pharaoh. He changed his name to that of Akheraton or Iknaten, meaning "the Disk is satisfied." That was in accordance with the new religious idea which he introduced and for which he created a new centre at a place which he called Akhetaton meaning "the Horizon of the Disk," better known to-day as Tell-el-Amarna where such vast treasures, literary and historical have been discovered. The kernel of this religion was the worship of one only god—Aton—and that under the symbol of, or personified as, the disk of the sun. Aton was a jealous god who would brook no rivals and consequently the names of all the other gods were, so far as possible, erased from tablets in all places. To put the point briefly Akhenaton set up a pure monotheism of a solar type.

There can be little doubt that the young Pharaoh was possessed of real genius. No one can read the translation of his hymn, "The Splendour of Aton" as given by Professor Breasted in his "History of Ancient Egypt," without admitting that fact. Moreover he introduced for the time

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being a marvellous change in the art of the country which, for the moment deserting the stiffness which characterized it before and after, was for a time free and more like the art of much later days. Akhenaton, however, had but twelve years sovereignty, not nearly long enough, if any reign would have been long enough, to place what was a perfectly new and even lofty idea of religion in a firm and lasting position. He left no son but two daughters, one of whom married a boy named Tutankhaton. After the death of the heretic king, the powerful priesthood of Ammon made short work of the new and hostile religion. The new Pharaoh, a boy and very likely a quite uninterested boy, was made to change his name to Tut-ank-Amen (the discoveries in whose tomb are matters of which everybody has heard) an indication of the collapse of the Aton movement and the return to that of Amen or Ammon. Thus Egypt became a land sacerdotally dominated by the priests of Ammon with their headquarters at Thebes or Thebes. Nu Ammon, the No-Ammon of the Bible. It was a place of extraordinary splendour where, in addition to the great temple of Ammon, there was a small edifice dedicated to Chensu, the moon-goddess, who was believed to bear the sun in her arms at night, and another to Mút the Mother goddess. From this wondrous collection of ruins came "Cleopatra's Needle," which in fact has no special connection with that

queen, in London and its fellow in New York, two of a series of magnificent monoliths adorned with hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Leaving Egypt we may now turn to some other sun-gods and concern ourselves first with Apollo who naturally arises to the mind as occupying that position in the Greek pantheon. But when that ~~case~~ is considered it appears that Apollo only acquired a relation to the sun in late days and then by some confusions with Helios (which word means the sun in Greek) who was the sun-god of Rhodes and Delos, two Ægean islands which at that time exercised an important influence in the civilisation of that region. Farnell in fact says that this attribution to Apollo was "a late by-product of Greek religion." Apollo or Helios had his chariot, and this chariot is on a Bronze Age carved stone at Kivik, with the crescent symbol of the moon, from which it would appear that the inhabitants of Scandinavia at that time had the same idea. Amongst the Egyptians the sun was carried in a boat, but ~~that~~ is a natural sequence of their position as a Nilotic nation living on a mere strip of land, constantly using boats but seldom chariots. Apollo was not the only Greek deity who acquired a connection with the sun for in one of his aspects Heracles was a sun-god and identified, especially in Cyprus, with the Tyrian Melkart. Jupiter, the chief of the Roman pantheon, originally as we have seen in all

probability a sky-god of the Aryan speaking peoples, became a sun-god also and one of his greatest temples was at Baalbek, anciently Heliopolis, where, as Jupiter-Baal, he is identified with the sun. In Egypt too he came to have the same attribution and as Jupiter-Ammon serves as one of many instances of the syncretic character of Roman worship. This deity was represented with ram's horns, the emblem of fertility and the centre of his worship was at Siwa—such is the modern name—a decaying little town occupied by a few Arabs, embedded in the Sahara. Climatic conditions leading to the uninhabitability of much of the Sahara once containing great and flourishing cities, like Timgad and Lambessa, have led to this changed state of affairs.

Cumont points out that, not long before the advent of Christianity, there came a time when "the one rational and scientific cult was that of the sun." It was welcomed, he tells us, by potentates for it made for their absolutism as in the case of the old Persian kings and of the later Roman Emperors. Breasted, speaking of Egyptian sun-worship, says that "in the ancient east monotheism was but imperialism in religion."

Dealing for the moment with the Emperors it may be noted that Aurelian (around 271 A. D.), who defeated Zenobia the great Queen of Palmyra, himself the son of a priestess of the

sun, erected a great temple to that deity on the Campus Martius, which, as Dill puts it, "did honour not only to the great lord of the heavenly spheres, but to the monarch who was the august image of his power on earth and who was endowed with his special graces." Aurelian further declared that Sol Invictus, i.e., the sun of the period immediately after the Winter Solstice, when it becomes clear that in the conflict with winter it is he that is to be conqueror, was the Protector of the Empire and of the Imperial House and in 307, not long before the triumph of Christianity, Diocletian proclaimed that Mithras was Sol Invictus. Nero and Caligula had altars erected to themselves in Eastern cities as solar deities. In fact in the Roman Empire, that was in the whole of the then civilised world, sun worship took the leading place. Even amongst the sternly monotheistic Jews there arose the Essenes, either a sect or a kind of monastic order, in the time of Jonathan Maccabæus (161-144 B. C.) who offered prayers to the sun, a practice which had been earlier denounced by Ezekiel as "having their backs towards the temple of the Lord, and their faces to the east: and they adored towards the rising sun." It would be tedious to pursue much further all the instances of sun worship but a few may be mentioned. At Palenque in Mexico the great glyph of the sun-god is still to be seen in his ruined temple. In the Andamans and amongst the



aboriginal tribes of Hindustan the sun is, in the former case, the wife, in the latter, the husband of the moon. The iconography of the sun in Indian art includes symbols such as the spoked wheel, rayed disk, etc., all of which are easily explicable. But there is a curious image of the sun-god in Northern India where the figure wears top-boots, a close-fitting bodice-like garment and a girthing which is said to be derived from the woollen waist-belt worn by Zoroastrians and sacred in its origin.

All this reminds one of the representations of Mithras, yet to be dealt with, but those representations are derived from the Hellenized Apollo, and so, it would appear, must this figure have also been.

A few words as to Astrology, at one time a real religion, must conclude this chapter. To-day the term is associated with a body of charlatans who lead foolish people captive with horoscopes and the like. That of course is a latter-day manifestation of the mediæval infatuation which led Popes and Sovereigns to maintain astrologers amongst their entourage, and municipalities, like Florence, to pay a City Astrologer as cities to-day appoint a Medical Officer of Health.

The story of that wild episode cannot be told here save by indicating its rationale. Weather undoubtedly influences a man's health and capacity for work and weather is closely associated

in the mind with the sun. If the sun, why not the moon? Lunacy seems to be the answer to that question as jovial, mercurial and saturnine dispositions connect their possessors with some of the planets, presumably those holding main sway in the heavens at the moment of their birth. The wise man must rule the stars, so runs the adage, ~~and~~ he must find out how to do that from the astrologers. Not that the stars can completely dominate man's doings—to hold that would be to deny free-will, but they can help or hinder. Better, therefore, choose a day on which they will help and only the astrologer can say what that day or days will be.

But, apart from this utilitarian aspect, astrology was a real religion as Cumont makes clear “religious in its origin and its principles: it was religious also in its close alliance with the Oriental cults, particularly those of the Syrian Baals and Mithra: it was also religious in the effects which it produced.” It was one of the factors which enabled the Oriental religions to sweep over the Roman Empire at a time when the earlier and, perhaps one might call them, indigenous forms of worship had fallen from their high estate to a condition of almost total neglect. But that is matter for another chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV

### TABUS

A TABU at its simplest is something that "simply isn't done." The word is Polynesian, and the thing is very prevalent there though in fact a world-wide phenomenon. We are chiefly familiar with it as a social matter. A gentleman does not enter a lady's drawing-room with his hat on: Why? There would be nothing immoral in doing so, in fact in some lands it is an act of discourtesy to enter a house uncovered. You must not enter a Christian church with your hat on if you are a man; nor with it off must you enter a synagogue; nor with your shoes on must you enter a mosque. It is a question of the different ideas of courtesy and the gentleman takes off his hat because it is the proper thing to do and he would be marked as a barbarian if he acted otherwise. Purely social tabus like this can and do bind with even greater rigidity than duly enacted laws. To cheat at cards is a far worse slur on a man's character than many perhaps more criminal deeds, and, to take a simpler instance, where moral guilt is in no

way involved, let any man shoot a fox on his own private property in Leicestershire or any other hunting county in England and see what happens to him!

Looked upon as a social discipline, no question about it, tabus have effected a great deal of good in binding society together; they have, to quote Jevons, "helped men to realise that they were under obligations to the community of which they were part, and that they would be visited by severe penalties if they neglected these duties." That is in a state where the numerous irrational tabus so prevalent amongst savage races have been pruned and eliminated by the principle, learnt from Christianity, that God's laws must be reasonable and those of man should be also.

However, we must turn back from this preliminary discourse intended to make clear what a tabu is, to the meaning and origin of the thing in its most flourishing conditions. The word Tabu is of Tongan origin and by derivation signifies Ta—marked—and Bu an intensifying adjective, thus "especially marked" and is applicable to all sorts of things, persons, animals, places, acts and so on. And thus in full flower it becomes a thing of intolerably hampering character. If a chief's foot touches any spot of ground that spot becomes tabu and no one else can approach it, so that when a chief in Tahiti goes out, he must be carried about to avoid this mishap. The manner

in which the unhappy Flamen Dialis in Rome was encumbered with tabus has been described in a previous chapter and forms a good example of what is being dealt with. The dangers of infringing a tabu may occur of course by touch but also by sight; by mere accidental proximity; by hearing. Moreover a tabu may infect things, actions and times. As Jevons points out on the day of a chief's decease work is tabued; the corpse "defiles" not only those who come in contact with it, but all work done on the fatal day. The custom of tabus was universal, and, as the object of this book is to be informative but not encyclopædic, it may suffice to consider one people and their various tabus and to follow Warde Fowler's account of the Romans in ancient days. To begin with they had their tabus associated with various times of life. The new-born child was tabu—"unclean" a common idea amongst primitive races. It must be disinfected or purified and that brings up the point that it is always possible by using the proper means to "lift" a tabu. And so the ninth day after birth for boys and the eighth for girls was the *dies lustricus* the day of purification. Then the child approaches the age of puberty—another dangerous date—and the toga of childhood is laid aside with a sacrifice "a faint survival of purification." When death occurred again there was infection followed by the appropriate means of purification.

Further the Romans had, like some other peoples, the idea of the tabu of women who were, and especially at certain periods, highly "infectious." Women were excluded from certain religious ceremonies; for example they might not take part in the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima nor might they swear by the name of ~~that~~ god. To conclude the Roman tabus, strangers were dangerous and methods had to be pursued to avert, in the public interest, their infective character. There were places and times which were tabu but of course those conditions are common in all parts of the world. Before turning to the wider consideration of the subject it will be interesting to note the tabus of women amongst the Gypsies of to-day as recently narrated by Mr. Thompson in the Journal of the Gipsy-Lore Society, bearing in mind that the Gypsies are an oriental race who may have brought these tabus with them through all their wanderings since they left their Indian home. With them women are always treated as impure and not merely at certain seasons. Gypsies will destroy any piece of crockery or cooking utensil touched by a woman's skirt; no woman may walk over a stream or spring from which drinking water is taken, lest it be defiled: and this power of contamination without contact applies to things like crockery: "suppose now" said a girl, "my mother or one of the girls had stepped over the tea things as we

were getting our teas, d'ye think my father'd ha' eaten another bite?"

How did custom or groups of customs so widespread as these arise? That tabus are in no sense the origin of religion is clear; that they become associated with religion seems equally obvious. Jevons was of the opinion that, starting from the fact "that amongst savages universally there are some things which categorically and unconditionally must not be done" we are driven to the conclusion that "this feeling is a 'primitive' sentiment, a tendency inherent in the mind of man." On the other hand Andrew Lang held such a view to be untenable, believing that one could always find a reason, logical enough—granted the premisses—if one looked for it with sufficient care. For instance a Melanesian may not speak to his mother-in-law and must avoid her company so strictly that he may not even walk along the seashore after her until the tide has obliterated the marks of her feet. That seems a very absurd tabu but not when we consider it in conjunction with the matrimonial customs of the same place which do not forbid the marriage of a son-in-law with his mother-in-law. The provision is to prevent the possibility of jealousy on the part of the wife. If her husband cannot come into the company of her mother there can be no opportunity for love making. Or again in North Borneo and Formosa the women may not weave whilst their

men are away at the wars. The explanation of that is that the shuttle goes in and out during the weaving process and thus seems to pursue no fixed course. That would not do for the fighting men who must not vacillate nor sway from side to side and might be led to do so by the example of the shuttle. Here we are at least on the verge of sympathetic magic. A careful analysis of the conditions leads to some such view as this: man, as we have already seen, is not quite at home in this world; he is surrounded by influences not fully comprehended but dangerous or beneficial. He may annoy them without knowing it and the only way in which he can well avoid so dangerous a thing is to avoid those things which in the past appear to have been the prelude to misfortune. Some important person one day fell into serious misfortune on the very day that he had upset a salt-cellar—be careful never to upset salt and if you do, purify yourself by throwing a pinch over your left shoulder. Now one may safely say that in the vast majority of cases there was no casual nexus whatever between the mishap and the foregoing incident. That there may have been in some is obvious for example it would soon become tabu (somewhat to strain that word) to eat the berries of Deadly nightshade after a few persons had died from doing so. Thus there would be a certain group of connected facts and misfortunes which would intensify the belief that



there was a connection—really lacking—between others. Moreover the primitive man is very susceptible to the influence of “suggestion.” A sick negro in the Calabar district was recovering from pneumonia; had in fact recovered from it as a specific disease, nothing remaining but the normal weakness and lassitude. Nevertheless the man was dying, not from any disease but because he thought he was dying and in fact was actually dying. My friend the physician to the case was hopeless for all that orthodox medicine could do had been done. At last he summoned his very irregular colleague the local “medicine-man” who arrived and carried out his various incantations. My friend sat by his patient with his hand on what had been a feeble and failing pulse and noted its steady improvement until when all was done and the medicine-man had departed (refusing any fee by the way) the patient, who would otherwise by that time have been dead, was a cured man. Now it is very true that we explain such an occurrence by the word “suggestion” and doubtless that is a potent agent, in fact the “good bedside manner” of the family practitioner is that, but can we expect a savage to refuse his belief in the fact that he was actually and physically cured by the medicine-man? In plain fact he was cured by him but along lines which neither he nor his patient understood. Now turn to the tabu question. An Australian blackfellow who discov-

ered that his wife had lain on his blanket—a serious infringement of tabu—died of terror in a fortnight. Or take this case from New Zealand: “It happened that a New Zealand chief of high rank and great sanctity had left the remains of his dinner by the wayside. (Being a chief’s meal it was of course most highly tabu). A slave, a stout, hungry fellow, coming up after the chief had gone, saw the unfinished dinner, and ate it up without asking questions. Hardly had he finished, when he was informed by a horror-stricken spectator that the food which he had eaten was the chief’s.” “I knew,” proceeds the narrator, “the unfortunate delinquent well. He was remarkable for courage and had signalised himself in the wars of the tribe . . . no sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died, about sundown the same day.” Finally consider the following incident to which Bishop Le Roy was an eye witness. “While travelling one day in eastern Africa,” he writes, “along with a European explorer who wished to become initiated in the things and people of the country, I arrived one evening at an encampment where they pointed out many wild boars to us. My companion soon killed one. As our porters, true savages from the distant interior, refused to eat any of it because the meat was interdicted (*mwiko*) for them, he

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devoured an enormous slice by way of protest: what excruciating indigestion during the night! As my unfortunate companion, groaning, pressing his stomach, and making lamentable efforts to free himself, had awakened our men, they found nothing better to do than to organize a circle about him, singing:

‘It’s the pig, it’s the pig.,  
It’s the pig that revolts.’

Then came the solo:

‘O pig!  
Come out if you wish.  
But do no evil to our white man,  
For he ate you by mistake!’

Finally the pig came out and this novice learned the true meaning of tabu that night.” Here again, in such cases it may be asked would it be easy to prove to those believing in the tabu that they were all wrong and that it was purely a lively imagination which effected the result?

I cannot believe it and feel a kind of suspicion that even the white man who had so much trouble in ridding himself of the pig, might begin to consider with seriousness the nature of a tabu. Whether his illness was due to suggestion or to tough meat or even possibly unwholesome meat—in which case the tabu would be one of those of the logical and reasonable kind—does not ap-

pear from the tale as we receive it. But the porters would take a lot of persuading, after such an incident, that their tabu was ill-founded.

From what has just been said it may readily be understood how the tabu motive enters into the question of illness and medical treatment. Dr. Rivers for example gives an account in his "Medicine, Magic and Religion" of a little island named Mandesu or Eddystone, in Melanesia where, as he says, "the account of medical practice is at the same time an account of tabu." Nearly every disease which occurs on this little island is ascribed to the infraction of a tabu on the fruit of certain trees. Of course the medicine-man requires as part of his professional training to learn what are the trees with which tabus are associated, how infractions of those tabus can occur and how, when they have occurred peace may be restored, in other words the disease and the treatment—diagnosis and therapeusis. The same is true of many other places. Hence the question of tabus touches religion on the one hand and medicine on the other. And it forms another example of the fact that these savages argue and conclude along lines identical with those used by thinkers in civilized races. The savages quite often reason from false premisses and so come to wrong conclusions, but such a process is anything but unknown amongst thinkers who certainly might be expected to be better informed.

## CHAPTER XV

### TOTEMISM—MARRIAGE—ANIMAL WORSHIP

To begin with, the word totem is a mistake for Long, writing in 1791 of the Northern Americans, used that term when he should have written Otem which is the proper Indian word. However the word is fixed now and never likely to be abandoned and the customs entailed must be considered under that name.

There are innumerable pages in print on this much discussed and much disputed subject and it will only be possible here to deal with some of its aspects and with them but briefly. The totem is the name for a class of objects with one of which a tribe or an individual believes it or himself to be in special relationship. At the outset let us note that it is always a minor object and that the Supreme Being is never a totem. There is some kind of magical pact or relationship between the object and he who considers it to be his totem. It is and has been a means for binding society together by means of tribal and family totems and as we shall see has had and still

has a potent effect in defining forbidden degrees of marriage amongst primitive folk.

Is it a true religion? There has been dispute over this point but the reply seems to be that it is not but that it is associated with religion presupposing as it does the existence of a world of spirits.

Is it the origin of religion? The reply has been in the affirmative by some; Jevons for example in his excellent book leaning much too strongly to that side. It has even been claimed that the domestication of animals sprang from this; a quite unnecessary assumption without any vestige of proof.

A good deal of the proof for this view has undoubtedly been derived from the very complicated system of totemism known to exist and carefully studied amongst the aborigines of Central Australia. But the acceptance of this evidence as conclusive implies the totally unwarranted view that these are really the most primitive of folk. That is not so for, as Lowie points out, the Andamanese, the Semangs of Malaya and the Paviotso of Nevada have much more claim to such a title and in these sociologically simplest tribes totemism does not exist. Totemism, the same author very properly says, is a wide-spread but far from universal phenomenon, while the belief in spiritual beings is almost universal; it is just these rudest tribes, which have a decisive bearing on

the question, who are non-totemistic animists. Hence the notion of spirit cannot be derived from totemism. Moreover the totemic ideas of the Australians represent a highly localized product and cannot be accepted as the earliest form of totemism. But if neither a true religion nor the origin of religion it is none the less closely enough connected with religion\* for the totemist will on occasion pray to his totem. The Indian in a canoe, finding that his enemies are gaining on him, will call upon the saw-duck his totem to help him to row faster. The Tlingits who have the wolf for their totem cry out "we are your relations, do not hurt us" which reminds one of Mowgli in the Jungle Book "we are of one blood you and I."

Totemism is not universal though undoubtedly it is very wide-spread; a fact which would incline one to believe that it was very ancient. That, however, is a much disputed point and perhaps opinion to-day tends to think that it is not so very ancient. Great age, and great if not universal distribution were the prevalent ideas in an earlier day of anthropology when less was known on the subject than to-day. Efforts, which have turned out to be unavailing, were made to show that the religious systems of the Celts and Semites for example included Totemism if indeed they were not actually based on it. The same fate befell an attempt to show that the Saxons who invaded Bri-

tain were totemists. In fact the custom and its distribution are now beginning to be seen in a more accurate perspective.

In the case of tribal totems there is no doubt that in some instances there is a legend associating the tribe with its totem animal by actual descent, an *ex post facto* explanation we may assume, but none the less interesting. Thus a group of the Choctaws, which has the crawfish for totem, claims that their origin is its full explanation. Crawfish came out of the ground into the camp of the Choctaws who were kind to them, pared their claws and generally improved them into human beings, and those bearing that totem are their descendants to-day. Another out of many examples may be taken to show the reasons put forward for the tribal totem though descent is not in this case connoted. The frog totem of some of the Tlingit Indians is thus accounted for. Walking in the dark, a man accidentally kicked a frog and as a result fell into a magic swoon. His body supposed to be that of a dead man was taken back to his home but his spirit was conveyed to Frogtown where the Chief Frightful Face upbraided him with what he had done. Apologies were followed by forgiveness and the spirit was allowed to quit Frogtown and reanimate its body. On the story being told to the clan the frog was adopted as their totem.

Turn to another very instructive instance in a



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very distant part of the world the Trobriand Islands in Melanesia. Here there is the quite common myth explaining the origin of the inhabitants by their emergence in the past from underground. In this case it was the totem animals which all made their appearance from the same hole—a rather unusual thing.

The first to appear was the iguana which finding its way out climbed a tree. Next came the dog, followed by the pig and finally the Lukwasisiga totem which varies according to different versions of the tale. The dog totem of the Lukuba clan was at first the leader, but, having eaten some offensive food, the pig of the Malasi clan became head and that clan is to-day regarded as the chief body even though some of its sub-clans are far below the members of the other totem groups. The story does not explain the transformation of the totem animals into ordinary human beings but the account which explains the order of precedence of the clans is quite interesting.

How the clan totem has been acquired is a matter which follows no definite rule and no doubt it may have been arrived at in different ways by different clans. But the personal totem is another matter and the way in which that is settled is pretty much the same in most parts of the totem employing world. In North America when the boy arrives at the time of puberty and is ripe for initiation into the ceremonies of the tribal totem

he must acquire his own. That is done after fasting and is often associated with blood offering in the shape of tattooing. The animal first dreamt of by the boy during these rites is to be his totem, not an individual animal, but the dog or turtle or whatnot. He is allowed to kill one of the species and from its skin is made his "medicine-bag." It is a noteworthy point, as Jevons says, that throughout these rites there is no sign of any priest or shaman, which, he thinks, argues in favour of their ancient character. The Canadian Indians appear to have tattooed their totem, when acquired, on their breasts and in all cases they were used as their signatures as may be seen in many deeds and documents of the early colonial period. The Polynesian "tiki," which is their form of totem, seems formerly to have been acquired in the same way but in more recent times by a process of choice similar to that employed by the tribes of Tehuantepec where during the latest stages of the woman's confinement the relations draw on the floor representation of different animals, rubbing each one out as it is drawn. That which happens to be in existence when the child appears is its totem. In other cases names are called out and the choice made in the same way. It is a curious point that the relation between the man and his totem animal should vary so much in different races in respect of the attitude which he must adopt to its life. In some cases he may not

eat it at all or perhaps may eat it sacramentally or with an apology for "Needs must." But on the other hand in other places it may be eaten freely or, if not eaten by its totem bearer, he may employ every magical means to multiply its numbers so that those not of that totem may enjoy plenty of food and in turn help him to have abundance of their totem animals. *Do ut des!*

The totem of the tribe is associated with important events in the life of its members in many instances. The Ottawa deer clan for example painted their children on the fifth day after birth with red spots or stripes like a fawn. The Kolong red-dog clan of Java rub the bride and bridegroom over with the ashes of a red dog before they are united in marriage. At the other end of life the Omaha buffalo clan wrapped their dying men in buffalo skins. The totem system is very highly elaborated amongst some of the central tribes of Australia as will be seen by the post-mortem associations with it. Amongst the Warramanga the body of the dead man is first of all placed in a tree where it remains for a year—the tree being searched from time to time to ascertain whether any bird or beast has visited the remains which might throw light on the manner of the death which—as always—must have been magical. Nothing being found, at the end of the year, the dead man's permission having been ceremonially asked, the bones are taken down; the

skull is smashed with a stone axe; one arm bone is selected and wrapped up in a strip of bark; the rest, with the fragments of the skull, are buried in an ant heap. The burial men hand over the arm-bone to the father or other relative of the dead man whilst the men bow down over it and the women wail. Finally this arm-bone is also broken by a blow from a stone axe and then is buried in a trench by the snake totem mound whereby the spirit of the dead man is finally united with his tribal totem.

The few pages which have been devoted to this vast subject will at least indicate the range and diverse ramifications of the totem but there is one direction not yet alluded to where it becomes of extreme importance and that is in connection with marriage customs and especially what are called "Forbidden Degrees" a matter which has been handled with immense learning by Frazer in his *Totemism and Exogamy*.

The older theory of marriage was one set up at the time that the evolution hypothesis was encouraging the construction of easy ladders of development for all problems, marriage included. So it was supposed to commence with the simplest state of absolute promiscuity like the beasts. Then came the stage of "group-marriage," followed by polygamy, and at last monogamy. The only drawback to this attractive picture is, that studied by the historical method—the only true touchstone

—there is not one particle of evidence for it. To begin with no one has ever put his finger on a case of absolute promiscuity in any part of the world or at any period of its history.

Africa with its many primitive peoples ought, if any part of the world, to present an instance of this but there is not one to be found. We must dismiss that rung of the ladder and the evidence for group marriage is very shadowy and unsatisfactory. The simpler and more primitive the races, the more we find monogamy the rule, and so to-day opinion turns to the view that one man, one wife was the original condition and that polygamy, still more polyandry, are corruptions of that good custom. As to the former the surplusage of women counts for something, but the multiplication of wives seems to have been often due to increase in wealth or station for in some African tribes, where monogamy is the rule, the chief has a group of wives. There is one thing however to be remembered about this polygamy that there is always a marked difference of position between the head or first wife and the others and moreover that the system is an ordered one which does not break up the family ties and hence is much more moral and much less destructive of social life and tribal unity than the disordered system of polygamy which under another name really exists in countries where divorce is a commonplace. In further connection with this matter

it should be remembered that the laws against adultery in most primitive races are very severe, the death penalty being frequently exacted for such an offence. In some cases pre-matrimonial innocence is not rigidly insisted upon, but as a rule post-matrimonial purity is, at least on the part of the wife often too of the husband. And where that is in appearance contradicted by the custom in some countries of lending a wife to a visiting stranger for a night, that is explained by the fact that the laws of hospitality demand such a proceeding and override the other regulations.

A word is perhaps necessary as to the rare condition of polyandry which consists in one woman having a group of husbands and exists in places where there is a paucity of females as in parts of Thibet. The "Woman of Shamleigh" in Kipling's "Kim" is an example.

Turning to Forbidden Degrees we are confronted with a similar picture to that which we have met in other cases. The lines are drawn more closely amongst primitives where incest, for example, or the marriage of brother and sister are looked upon as unmentionable horrors. On the other hand in relatively more advanced pagan societies we do meet with these customs as in ancient Egypt and amongst the Incas of Peru where brother must marry sister in the highest ranks. But it is the association with the totem which is most interesting and there are many

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cases of exogamy where men and women must marry outside their totem, coupled with the much less common cases of endogamy where they must marry within it, a custom which certainly cements the clan ties and is guarded by certain rules preventing too close unions. It will be convenient to study some examples and first of all of cousin marriage. Such marriages to-day are not forbidden by the non-Catholic denominations nor by the laws of civilised states but are only permitted under dispensation for good cause amongst Catholics. Custom varies amongst primitive folk. The Baonde, a Bantu tribe, for example favour cousin marriage but under peculiar and unexplained conditions. They must not be of the same totem, which is comprehensible. But the cousin married by a man must be the daughter of his mother's brother and any other cousin marriage is regarded as incestuous and abominable. In Melanesia cousin marriage is forbidden and those who occupy that relationship or any other forbidden relationship to one another—perhaps very wisely,—are not allowed to speak to one another; to give presents to one another; or even to mention one another's names. The totemistic system in connection with marriage relations is most complicated and has been carefully worked out amongst the aborigines of Central Australia. It can be studied in full detail in Frazer's exhaustive account. This system may now be sketched and

the first and commonest form amongst all totemistic people is the two division system—Crow may not marry Crow. But Crow may marry Eaglehawk and vice versa. The second, or four class system, introduces a further complication for here Crows and Eaglehawks are divided into two groups each and Crow A may marry Eaglehawk A but not Eaglehawk B.

Lastly, there is an eight division system of extreme complexity which will be named but not described here. *En passant* is it not clear that the savages who devised such complicated methods must have been possessed of at least an average supply of brains? Now let us see what all this means in our terminology. The two division system bars the marriage of brothers and sisters and in some cases of children and parents. The four division system bars brothers and sisters and children and parents always but not cousins whilst the eight division bars all the above and one kind of cousin, nor can a man marry his sister's children. It must not for a moment be supposed that the limitations mentioned above are the maximum. They are only the minimum for, whether the divisions permit or not, unions of children and parents are punishable by death. Naturally the question arises as to how these restrictions, so very much upon our own lines, came to be adopted. How or why did the primitive savage come to appreciate the hideousness of marriages which have been encour-



aged in decadent pagan civilisations? That matter has been considered in an earlier chapter.

There remains the matter of animal worship which must not be passed by without a short note. That such is common in many parts of the world is obvious but how it arose is not so clear. Petrie thinks that it arose from the fact that in his earliest days when man's intellect was not fully developed he looked upon other animals as his equals and only later thought himself their superior. There is not a particle of evidence for any such theory nor does it in any way explain why man should exalt his inferior to the position of a deity, even a minor deity. Nevertheless there are the facts and perhaps in its fullest development we may find animal worship in ancient Egypt where the rule seems to have been—one town, one god and that some kind of living thing, bird or beast. That animal was sacred in its own city and after death it was very often mummified and deposited in a special cemetery. A few instances will suffice to make the custom clear. The baboon was associated with the god of wisdom Tehuti and the great cemetery of that kind of animal is at Thebes. The jackal, afterwards associated with the god Anubis, was known as Ap-u-at, "the opener of ways" knowing the best tracks to follow and as he commonly slunk around cemeteries became their god. Ta-Urt "The Great One" the hippopotamus was at first the guardian of preg-

nancy, but in an agricultural age, as a ravager of the fields, it was an emblem of Set, the evil deity, and as such was worshipped at Nubt and Antaeopolis. The Bull was a special favourite and four cities worshipped different breeds; Apis at Memphis, Urmer at Heliopolis, Bakh at Hermonthis and Ka-nub at Kanobos. The cow was sacred to Isis.

The crocodile was always feared, and no wonder, and its worship was largely placatory. Sebek, the crocodile; was worshipped in the Fayūm and elsewhere and had various cemeteries including the great cave at Maabdeh. Another was at Crocodilopolis and of course there is the famous example at Oxyrhyncus where so many of the extraordinarily interesting papyri were found stuffing the carcasses of dead crocodiles. The cat was regarded as the emblem of Bastet, who had originally been represented with the head of a lioness and the rise to political importance of Bubastis in the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty brought the cat into such favour that the great festival at that city, said to have been attended on occasion by no less than seven thousand people, ensured its sacredness, since Petrie tells us that the mob would certainly have put to death any one who even by accident killed that animal. The ibis was the symbol of Tehuti the god of knowledge who, as scribe of the gods and represented with the head of an ibis, is to be seen in the Book of the Dead recording the

judgment of the soul. As to the falcon, another sacred bird, that has been discussed in connection with the worship of the sun. What exact significance did the Egyptians attach to this apparently gross form of worship? Of course there must have been many who did in fact worship the bird or beast itself. That their bodies were sacred is proved by the mummified examples in huge numbers and the cemeteries. But of course it is possible that others took a more esoteric view. Professor Halliday points out that later writers, *e. g.*, Plutarch, examining into this question suggested that the worship of the animal might have been a way of symbolising certain characters of the gods and that is perhaps indicated by certain points mentioned above. Or again, as the same ancient author questioned, was it because some animals undoubtedly performed valuable services to mankind?

Finally he suggests that behind all this form of worship there must have been a deep esoteric meaning so that "its very irrationality is a benevolent spur to the religious mind to grope for the hidden spiritual significance." But of course this was the utterance of a kindly spirit in an age when allegorical explanations were pushed to great lengths and of one in search of a rational if not euhemeristic explanation of this seemingly inexplicable worship of birds and beasts.

## CHAPTER XVI

### INITIATIONS AND INITIATION CEREMONIES. SECRET SOCIETIES

THERE are of course various kinds of initiations; into secret societies; into religious duties; into a new phase of life and with the last of these we may commence, for the ceremonies which take place when a boy or girl comes to the time of puberty have almost everywhere and perhaps always been marked features as a mile-stone in the life history of the adolescent. Amongst the Romans for example the *bulla* was put aside and consecrated to Hercules or Juno according to the sex of the child which had abandoned it. The boy's hair was cut short and a lock thrown into the fire in honour of Apollo whilst a second was thrown into water to honour Neptune.

The ceremony may take place before puberty, as it does with the Parsis, where somewhere around the age of seven is the time selected.

The child is first washed all over with cow's urine and then is girdled with the sacred cord composed of seventy-two strands symbolical of the seventy-two chapters of a certain very impor-

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tant portion of the Zend Avesta. Thereafter the child is supposed to be responsible for his actions and is a full member of the Zoroastrian church. If he dies prior to that ceremony, being of no responsibility, his spirit returns to Ahura Mazda as pure as it left him. Coming to the numerous and varied initiation ceremonies of primitive races they have this underlying feature namely that the initiates have to undergo a prolonged retreat apart from their families, during which various matters of a more or less secret nature are imparted to them, and, at the end of which or during which, they undergo some more or less cruel test or tests. Then they return to their tribe and families full men. In many cases the significance of all this is a death and a re-birth but a few examples will make these matters more clear. The aboriginal Australians take the boys about to be initiated apart for a considerable period and during that time they teach them a variety of things by word of mouth and by other means. The boys sit on one side while the instructing men race round on all fours, their clubs tucked through their loin-cloths over their backs, to simulate dogs whose sagacity they desire their neophytes to possess, as well as the agility and pace of the kangaroo, whose movements they also imitate. But far more important matters are dealt with for, as Lang puts it, "the precepts as to 'speaking the straightforward truth' as to unselfishness, avoid-

ance of quarrels, of wrongs to 'unprotected women,' of unnatural vices, are certainly communicated in the Mysteries of some tribes, with, in another, the name and nature of 'our Father' Mungangaur." Finally as a test of courage, as a blood-sacrifice, or as both; perhaps even with some further significance, there is the mutilation; a finger or part of one may be amputated, or a tooth or teeth knocked out with a stone. Or again circumcision may be performed and that is very common in many places besides amongst the people now under consideration.

Everybody is aware of its religious significance amongst the Jews and Moslems. But it is also observed by the various coloured populations of Africa-Bantus, Negritos and Hamites; by Polynesians and Melanesians and by several tribes in America. An extension of this practice is the really dangerous and disgusting operation of sub-incision practiced by some of the Australian tribes.

Circumcision forms a part of the Balum initiation ceremonies described at length by Dr. Lowie. The boys in that part of New Guinea are carried away from their mothers to a ceremonial building where they are kept for from three to five months terrified by the skirlings of numerous large Bull-roarers and other noises and sworn to absolute secrecy as to the ceremonies which they have to pass through. Finally all the rites are over and

the initiated youths return home to their families with painted faces and hair decorated with ornaments, to partake of a feast in honour of the occasion. The period of convalescence after the circumcision operation, which covers some two or three months, is occupied by admonitions of an ethical character. Initiation of some kind is almost universal for boys and takes place also at times, but by no means so universally, in the case of girls. For example, amongst the Basutos the girl must not be seen during the time when she has reached puberty and goes about in a covering which hides her face and neck and with whitened legs. Where the initiation is also one into some secret order of women there may be very cruel ceremonies as amongst the "Brides of the Serpent" *i.e.*, girls consecrated to the worship of the snake at Whydah in West Africa, on whose skins are burnt with hot irons figures of flowers and animals. Of course it will be remembered that in none of these painful ceremonies are there any anæsthetics available; in fact courage to bear the pain without a sound is of the essence of the ceremony in most cases.

That, however, belongs largely to the subject of secret societies which must now be dealt with. Everybody in the Eur-American culture is familiar with such societies and west of the Atlantic it may be assumed that the majority of men belong to something of the kind. It is quite clear

that there is deep buried, in the male breast at least, a passionate desire to "dress up." Coupled with that there is an equally intense desire to belong to something that has secrets—real or imaginary—passwords, oaths and all the rest of it. To outsiders, like the writer, it seems difficult to understand why the numerous benevolent objects carried out by these organizations or some of them require such accessories, but so it is. On the other hand there are some of these organizations which are at least potentially dangerous and some which have been, indeed still are, actually so in some parts of the world. The brethren of these organisations should know that it is not merely amongst civilised persons that such organisations exist but that all over the world they are to be found with the same accessories—oaths, passwords, secrets, regalia and so on. Sometimes these may be perfectly harmless organisations maintained for some specific purpose like the Amerindian dog-dancers of the plains whose purpose in life appears to be the performance of ceremonial dances, the secret of which is kept by the brethren. But, as will yet be seen, there may be much more sinister objects in view and the secret society may become not merely an *imperium in imperio* but the real instrument of government. Such it is claimed also has on more than one occasion been the case with European civilizations.

The Duk-duks of Papua form a great society



the members of which pretend to be the spirits of the dead, and, dressed in extraordinary disguises, appear to the women who are or feign to be terrified at the sight. It may be wondered how far this is simulated, for the men know quite well that they are not spirits and it may be assumed that some at least of the women recognise their spouses by scars or other characteristics. However, that is one of the ceremonies, but the order has other functions of the kind common to such organisations. The Tago or Tami cult as described by Lowie is a similar organisation for the terrifying of women and uninitiated boys.

The Egbo order of the Ekoi described by Lowie is one which has at least seven grades each of them coupled with an increasingly heavy entrance fee. Freemasonry is popularly supposed to have thirty-three degrees but an outsider to the "craft" must not dare to say whether that is correct or whether the condition of entrance fee to each exists. Let us note that the Mithraic religion, yet to be dealt with, also had seven grades. It is in Africa that the most evil of the secret societies are to be studied and what they may become shall be related by Bishop Le Roy. "Anti-religion has a worship of its own, with incantations, evocations, fetishes, offerings, sacrifices, ministers, festivals and assemblies. Anti-religion also claims to receive its power and means of action from beings of another world, shades and spirits; not

by praying to them as religion would, but by forcing them to obey, with mysterious and usually abominable practices, among which may be the murder of near relatives, wives, sons and daughters. The ministers of this worship are sorcerers and witches. They usually work separately, sometimes for their own advantage, and sometimes for that of their employer, by wreaking vengeance, promising success in different enterprises, or by causing the disappearance of enemies, neighbours or relatives. They also form themselves into secret societies, with councils and meetings which usually take place at night, in the depth of the woods and far away from villages. They pretend that their power comes from compacts with spirits from another world, by a ritual known only to their affiliated members. Extraordinary manifestations, mysterious apparitions, transformations of human beings into animals; possessions, poisonings, ritual murder, the making of images to torture human beings in effigy, cannibalism and all the diabolical practices of sorcery may be found in the countries of the black races." Thus we get a picture of all the horrors connected with witchcraft and devil-worship which have been touched on in previous chapters brought to a focus in the worst secret societies of Africa. As an example of the kind of society which in reality governs, let us consider the organisation existing in Girayama (west Africa).

This has three degrees but as the first is subdivided into three, the second into four and the third into two, there are really nine degrees of which the highest is called that of the Hyænas and it is said, doubtless with truth, that the Hyænas inspire universal terror, being the depositaries of all the most deadly spells and secrets. But above even the Hyænas there are the Engetsi or Possessors of the Land, who are three in number, culled from the highest grade and these three really govern Girayama and judge its people. So much for the important group of African secret societies. Something must now be said about the preliminary ceremonies for initiation into important grades religious or quasi-religious which existed in North America. For example amongst the Sioux the aspirant to the status of medicine-man, doubtless an important and lucrative position, had to endure the ceremony known as "looking at the sun" which consisted in being "pegged out" on his back all day. Bound to the ground by cords threaded through his pectoral muscles, carrying his bow and arrows in his hands, he must stare uninterruptedly at the sun whilst his fellow tribesmen around him applaud his courage. •

Of course this was a small thing beside the really severe tests for chieftainship required by some of the tribes notably the Mandans whose aspirants (as one sees in the picture made at the

time and published in books on Indian matters) allowed large wooden skewers to be driven under either their pectoral or dorsal muscles. Ropes were fixed to the ends of these skewers and the unhappy victims suspended by them swung in torture before the eyes of the tribe until they were taken down. The essence of the ceremony was that the participant should at no moment of his trial exhibit by sound or movement any trace of feeling. It is true that this ceremony is scarcely religious but as a part of the picture of initiations it must not be omitted.

## CHAPTER XVII

### POLYTHEISM AND THE PANTHEON

BELIEF in a multiplicity of gods is a common and well recognised form of religion. As we shall see in succeeding chapters the Oriental lands offer an untold variety of deities for worship. Such multiplicity of deities is, according to one view, a stage on the road which terminates by monotheism. According to the view advocated in this book, polytheism is a degradation of the earlier monotheistic condition. Polytheism, a multiplicity of deities, may have arisen in various ways. Ancestor-worship at once suggests itself as a method by which an ever increasing number of deities, if only very minor deities, must constantly be added to the list; those of transcendent merits during life attaining, however, after death far more than a mere minor position in the world of gods. Animism also, quite obviously, is capable of producing numerous deities, and pantheism, in a certain sense, as will become obvious when the religions of India are considered.

Then there is the syncretic process which re-

quires careful consideration. It is a commonplace but none the less a profound truth that to understand a period or a people one must try to live ourselves back to the time, or dream ourselves back as Peter Ibbetson and the Duchess of Towers did, or in some way to get inside the skins of those we are trying to comprehend. It is their ideas and their times that we want to understand and not our own and we must get rid of our own ideas, for the nonce, if we are to understand theirs. Thus, up to the sixth century before Christ at any rate, a century which was one of those extraordinary periods in the world's history when there were in different places sudden uprisings of new ideas, it would have been quite inconceivable to any man that there could be more than one kind of religious views in any one state. In other words the existence of what we should call dissenting bodies would have been a fact as startling to them, and far more discomposing, than it would be for us to wake up some bright morning to the discovery that everybody in our own city or country was of exactly the same religious faith as, for example, was the case in England and in the other European countries for a number of centuries. Of course such a state of things added greatly to the strength of the commonweal and after the original unity had broken up it remained the ideal of politicians to recreate it. One state, one religion was the

policy of Queen Elizabeth of England and the Cecils, complicated no doubt by the fixed intention of holding on to the spoils of the earlier Church. But the unity idea was strong in their minds, just as it was in the minds of the rulers of Imperial Rome, when they devised the religious idea of the Genius of Rome or of the Divine Emperor as a binding link for their vast dominions. Nowadays such an idea seems to us chimerical, perhaps absurd to some people and to others, strange to say, even undesirable. At any rate we must fix our minds on the point that there was a time when unity of religious belief in any given state was a fact and any other condition would have been impossible. The god of the state had his area just as the god of the neighbouring state had his. This henotheistic idea did not necessarily cause the people of one state to believe that the god of the next state was not a god at all. He was not their god "and there an end on't" as Dr. Johnson would say. It was quite right for his own people to worship him because he was their god but the people of the next state "belonged to another parish" in the terms of the old story. Now let us suppose that by fortune of war two or more adjacent states become united or it may be by the peaceful methods of politics that the union takes place. What is to become of the diverse gods under those conditions? If, which is unlikely, the deities had no specific names, there

might be little difficulty in arguing that the two or more were really the same person. Or it might be possible to agree that, if the names were different, yet the person indicated was the same. That was a thing which we know to have happened, for example, when the Romans conquered Britain, they found that one of the Celtic gods was known as Toutates or some such name. He was the war-god of the inhabitants of the land. Obviously, said the Romans, this is our Mars, let us recognise him as such and so they dedicated altars, which remain to this day, "Marti Toutati." Other incidents of similar character will appear later. Finally, in such a union of states, all the gods may receive recognition and polytheism at once comes into existence.

The Romans were greatly addicted to the multiplication of deities by addition, at least in their later history, and if we include the almost innumerable "Numina" of whom the early Christian Fathers make such fun, the list of deities becomes almost inordinately long.

There seems to have been only one rule about such admissions—there must be no exclusiveness. The Romans themselves were by no means exclusive. The Emperor Alexander Severus in his private oratory had statues of Christ, Orpheus, Abraham and Apollonius of Tyana just as a gnostic sect worshipped Christ, Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle with the same cult. But the other gods



must not be excluded and that was just where the difficulty came in with Jews and Christians. For a time, the Jews escaped as a specially exempted body and indeed the Christians, in some measure, whilst they were looked upon as a mere sect of Judaism. But later on the refusals of Christians to offer a pinch of incense to the genius of the Emperor was sufficient to send them *ad leones* or to other unpleasant ends. From what has been said it will be clear that political operations may bring about polytheism and thus the significance of Jevons' statement that "in early times polytheism is the price which must be paid for political development." It must be tolerably obvious that such an evolution must lead to a somewhat chaotic condition of affairs and that some "tidying-up" process must suggest itself to orderly minds. Thus there comes into existence a Pantheon with a "President of the Immortals" as its chief. For example, as we have already seen, Sin the Moon-god was the chief deity of Ur of the Chaldees. When that city was conquered by Hammurabi, Marduk, his favoured deity, became the chief god, but Sin was one of his court. Following the plan of this book, special attention will be paid to one example of polytheism with further notice of other instances and Rome, as that best known, may be selected in the first place. The Romans were an unimaginative people, with little inclination for, nor any considerable mastery over

philosophy, intensely practical in their outlook upon life and their religious system was in correspondence. We shall not consider the early agricultural religion of Numa, but turn to the severely practical religion of the Roman home, the centre of their life as it must be the centre of life in any stable commonweal. The home as the centre of their life, was also the centre of their religion, and the paterfamilias, with his great powers, was the domestic priest. The daughters of the house looked after the hearth, the focus of family life, sacred to Vesta. There was another domestic deity, Janus, the god of the door, which guarded the sacred precincts of the home and kept at bay the stranger with his dangerous possibilities of influence. The civic worship was the domestic writ large. The Vestal Virgins with their perpetually burning hearth were the daughters of the State with their temple of Vesta. The god Janus had, though not till 260 B. C. his temple in another quarter of the city, though his worship was anterior to that time. These simple and easily explicable deities were supplemented by a flood of others from outside, largely anthropomorphic and in some cases from Greece, which additions may be dealt with as described for us by Warde Fowler. Hercules Victor was the first to appear, he tells us, the Greek Heracles, arriving by way of Tibur through the influence of Greek traders from Campania and Magna Græcia. He was a

god of trade and had his temple in the "busy cattle market of the city." With him came from Tusculum, the Heavenly Twins, Castor and Pollux and somewhere about the same period Minerva with her temple on the Aventine Hill. She came from the semi-Latin town of Falerii in southern Etruria "an old Italian deity taken over by the invading Etrurians from the people whose land they occupied." From the grove of Nemi, came Diana, a woodland spirit, whose worship was associated with "the priest who was the slayer and shall himself be slain." With respect to all these new deities, with the possible exception of Hercules, this, it seems, may be said, that they made but little impression on the minds of the Roman people. They belong to a new population; they represented new pursuits, alien to those of the old agricultural inhabitants—commerce, business, politics—things which did not very greatly interest them. But, since foreigners, with new ideas, must needs settle down amongst them, it was but to be expected that they should bring their religious ideas with them; also their gods and of course these must be provided with temples. How else could the newcomers expect a blessing on their trading? And, as for the earlier peoples, these new deities could do them no harm, in fact at times it might be quite handy to have them there ready to be appealed to. Fowler, having discussed the deities so far named, comes to

the most important of all—Jupiter, who as Jupiter Latarius was the acknowledged real, original god of the Latin league and had his temple on the Albar Hill.

This was rebuilt during a period of Etruscan domination in Rome and at the same time there was built, in the Etruscan style, and finally dedicated in B. C. 509, the great temple on the Capitoline Hill with its three cellæ, one each for Jupiter, Juno his spouse and Minerva. It was to the Jupiter of this temple that the terms *Optimus*, *Maximus* were applied and thus was he placed not only above all other Jupiters but all other deities as well. Thus we arrive at the Roman Pantheon for any further study of which the reader may be referred to Warde Fowler's *Religious Experiences of the Roman People*, to which learned and most interesting work this summary owes its facts. The relation of Jupiter to the supreme deities of other Aryan speaking races has been dealt with in a previous chapter and need not be rehearsed here, the point being reiterated that though the original deity was a sky-god he was not the actual sky. Ahura Mazda, the corresponding deity of Zoroastrianism amongst the Iranians, one of the same Indo-European group, was a sky-god but not the sky, for he was clothed by that as by a mantle woven by spirits and spangled with stars. The Greek pantheon was highly anthropomorphic and filled with figures resembling those

of Rome which indeed were in part borrowed from their Grecian neighbours. The Greeks had two groups of gods; the chthonian gods of the soil and the heavenly gods of Olympus and, prior to the time of Homer would not seem to have made much distinction between the two groups. The chthonic gods were especially Bæotian and Dorian; Homer represented the Ienic civilisation and gave the supremacy to the Olympian deities associated with his own particular culture, whilst keeping the chthonic group in the background. When, therefore, we think of the Greek Pantheon and think, as we do as a rule, in the terms of Homer we must not forget the others. Homer's Pantheon—the Pantheon of Olympus, was filled with frankly anthropomorphic deities whose exploits were at times not such as would do any credit to decent mortals. Xenophanes, the founder of the Eleatic philosophy, who flourished around 540-500 B. C. the first to decry the ancient deities, founded his objection to them on the facts that they were represented in the likeness of men and of immoral men too. His alternative was one most remarkable for the time at which he lived for it was One God, greatest among both gods and men, resembling mortals neither in form nor in thought. The Olympian deities played their parts in the affairs of mankind, as we know from Homer, having their own favourites and backing them against those of their

fellow gods and goddesses. And their President was Zeus as already explained.

The ancient Germanic tribes had their pantheon of which in very early times *Ziou* or *Twaz* was the chief deity. This name clearly belongs to the group of Indo-Germanic chief gods already dealt with. But the cult of this ancient god became eclipsed and practically forgotten after the rise of two rival deities, *Thor* (of Thurs-day) the god of fecundity and *Woden* (Wednes-day) the god of war. Strange results may flow from political fanaticism and few stranger than the attempt according to the *Daily Press* of some bright spirits in Germany in 1911, when national spirit had been excited to the boiling point, to abandon Christianity and return to the worship of *Odin* or *Woden*—"our old German god," a phrase popular with the late ruler of Germany. *Odin* was at any rate the god of the old Germans and the god of the Scandinavian and other Northern regions of Europe, vicê *Ziou* fallen into disregard. To these deities may be added a number of others such as *Frija* (of Fri-day) *Balder*, *Loki* and so on whose names and attributes may be sought in works on Northern Mythology.

The Celts, another people with an Indo-European speech, had their Pantheon though there still is dispute as to the personages belonging to it. *Julius Cæsar*, who was much in contact with the Celtic tribes, identified several of these deities

with those familiar to him in his own country. There was, he said, a Jupiter. Perhaps this may have been Taranis, the thunder god of some of the Gallic tribes. There was an Apollo, who was identified with Borvo, the god of medicinal springs, with Grannus, Belenus, Maponus and other Celtic gods. Toutates or Mars has already been mentioned and there are others but no definite chief of this pantheon—no “tidying-up” here, a fact which may be due to the intense individualism of the Celts which prevented the tribes uniting into any solid organisation or forming any real nation and thus no doubt precluded the process of completion of an orderly pantheon such as the Greeks and Romans had. Though indeed the Teutonic pantheon, with all the attributes of that race, was not as orderly as perhaps might have been expected.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### HINDUISM—PANTHEISM

EAST is east and west is west and never the twain shall meet, seems to sum up the two statements now to be quoted. "No Hindu idea is truly translatable to our western brains" says Fournier in his book on religions, and Kent after speaking of the totally different constitution of the Eastern as compared with the Western mind continues. "The Western temperament is primarily matter-of-fact, or, if you like, historical and scientific; while the Eastern temperament is primarily romantic, poetic and artistic. Whereas in so vital a matter as religion our first query would be, 'is it a fact?', the oriental mind, left to itself, would hardly ever dream of asking such a question. Instead of the fact, he always looks to the idea; and the acceptability of the idea is his criterion of assent." Such are the difficulties which confront anyone trying to understand the multifold religions and philosophies of the far East which have now to be considered and those difficulties must ever be borne in mind by the reader as an



explanation of the somewhat diverse views expressed in the writings of different authors.

There were two early migrations into India, that of the Kolarians—the hill-tribes of to-day, and of the Dravidians who predominate in Southern Hindustan. Then on top of these came the branch of the Indo-European race of Sanskrit speech. No doubt the earlier races had their religions, in fact the Sanskrit writings tell us that the Dravidians had their own cities, fortresses and considerable wealth with a priestly class asserted to be capable of restoring the dead to life and of controlling the weather. No doubt too the beliefs of these peoples were to some extent mixed up with those of the later arrivals, the two affecting one another.

It is the beliefs of the third race, however, with which we are concerned and for our study of these we have a series of sacred books perhaps the oldest in the world. The gradual changes of religious belief have thus been arranged in periods.

I. 1500-1000 B.<sup>•</sup>C. The Early Vedic Period, The age of the Rigveda, the oldest and most spiritual of the Vedic writings. There may have been a previous monotheism, of which we know nothing, but we are introduced to Dyauspiter the Father of the Gods with a group of animistic deities, for nature worship was in the ascendent at this time. Especially the worship of the sky

of which when dark, Varuna was the god; when bright, Mitra; and when gloomy and especially when rainy, Indra. In addition to these deities should be mentioned Agni, the god of fire and Vishnu, later on to become of great importance, but at this period a very inferior sun-god. At this time caste, to become of such importance at a later period and remain so down to this day, was unknown; there was no exclusive priesthood, men and women were on a footing of equality and the age of marriage was of a reasonable kind. There were no restrictions as to eating and drinking and, from the religious point of view, it is chiefly to be noted that there was no mingling of magic nor did any pantheistic idea intrude itself and, whilst there was a belief in a future state, the notion of the transmigration of souls had not yet arisen.

II. 1000-800 B. C. The period of the later Vedas ending with the Atharvaveda—the Veda of Charms, a book of magic. To this period belong also the Brahmanas which introduces a sacerdotal religion and the idea of reincarnation, also prohibitions in the way of eating, for beef may not be consumed, and a degradation of women, for the wife may not eat with her husband. Moreover this time also brings forth the Upanishads, the foundation of Hindu philosophy, with a new concept of religion centering around Brahma—the beginnings of pantheism. Caste now appears,

though with something less of rigidity than at a later date.

This is associated with the idea of Brahma for the Brahmins or highest caste sprang from his head; the Kshatriyas or warriors from his arm; and Vaishyas or husbandmen from his thighs. Besides these three there is a lower caste of Sudras or incorporated aborigines, sweepers and the like and each caste has a multitude of sub-castes. Coupled with this division of the population are many regulations as to food, and the partaking of food together and in regard to marriage. So that, as a writer remarks, it may matter very little to a native what his neighbour believes, but it matters a great deal as to whether he can or cannot eat with him.

This Vedantic or pantheist time continued until about 500 B. C.

III. Then comes in Buddhism, which will not be dealt with in this chapter, to hold sway for about a thousand years until 500 A. D. when—

IV. Submerged Brahmanism emerged with beliefs which now are the staple of Hinduistic India for of course there are other and very important beliefs there as we have yet to see. The paradox of this re-emerged Brahmanism is extraordinary heterogeneity with an underlying homogeneity; an innumerable number of gods, goddesses and godlets which can scarcely be glanced at here, coupled with the belief in one god. The explana-

tion as given by Dr. Kellog, who knew India well, is this: "every Hindu however many gods he worships will tell you that God is one." But that means that there is no such thing as any second existence—thus Brahma is not a personal being; nor is he essentially different from man or the universe. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva the Hindu divine triad are not distinct persons but three manifestations of Brahma. In that definition is contained the complete difference which exists between this triad and the Trinity of the Christian belief, a difference which does not seem to have been clearly perceived by all writers. "The Christian teaching represents the threeness in the one essence of the Godhead to be a threeness of persons such that the Father and the Son can reciprocally address each other as 'Thou,' but Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are not regarded as three distinct persons, but as ideally three manifestations of the One Being, which—in another than the Christian sense—is all and in all" so Dr. Kellog puts it. As all is in Brahma, evil is there too, and thus the licentiousness and other unloveable characters of his gods do not affect the Hindu. Of course since everything is part of the deity any stick or stone in so far forth is holy and might be worshipped as such. In fact we arrive at a pure pantheism in which personality as such appears utterly to vanish. Reincarnation is the fate of human beings and no one knows into

what kind of evil thing his soul may pass in the next incarnation. That depends on Karma, the law of the deed, for though there is no such thing as real evil, since the worst of actions are on the road towards the good, there are defects and it is these defects which may entail reincarnation and perhaps a very unpleasant reincarnation.

Brahma is represented as the possessor of four heads, each crowned with a pointed cap and of four pairs of arms each bearing an object and he is often seated on a peacock, a goose or a swan. One temple only in India, at Pushkar, is dedicated to him though it is denied by some that the attribution just mentioned is accurate. His two chief manifestations have been Vishnu, whom we have met before and Siva the storm-god of the Vedas. Most Hindus are devotees of one or other of these. Those of the former bear vertical marks painted on their foreheads. This form of religion is more cheerful than the other; has a trend towards theism but is associated with a tendency to great licentiousness. The worshipper of Siva bears horizontal lines on his forehead and practices a purely pantheistic religion which exacts bloody sacrifices and great austerities. A few of the other very numerous deities may be briefly mentioned in order to give some idea of the Hindu Pantheon and of the origins of some parts of it.

Rama of the Ramayana, associated with Ha-

human the monkey god, appears to have been a deified human being.

The Pandavas are five brothers, worshipped under the form of five stones, dealt with in the Mahabharata.

Krishna, whom some think to have been an actual deified human being, was perhaps originally the tribal god of some Rajput clan, but has become an avatar of Vishnu, and is represented as a hero invincible in war, brave but above all things crafty.

Kali the black or terrible tongue (one of seven) of Agni the god of fire is a blood-thirsty goddess represented as standing on the body of Siva and decked with a necklace of human heads and a wristband of human hands. Ganesh or Gunpati is the son of Siva who cut off his child's head and substituted for it that of an elephant.

It may be noted that even Buddha has been looked upon as an avatar of Vishnu.

As the Brahmins are the highest caste and the official priests of the religion a word concerning them may complete this section. After a study of the Veda, at the appropriate age every boy of the three upper castes passes through certain ceremonies of initiation and is invested with the Brahminical cord which he wears over the left shoulder and under the right arm and thus becomes Twice Born. As to the Brahmins the theory of their position in the cosmos is this: all existences

in animate nature are manifestations of the one eternal spirit, and their ultimate goal of supreme bliss is complete union with that spirit as the raindrop is absorbed when it falls into the sea and thus with complete loss of personality. That desired consummation is reached by reincarnation after reincarnation and the Brahmin is at the highest attainable point save complete absorption, hence his supreme position amongst the sons of men.

India is a land of many religions and Buddhism and Islam remain for future chapters. The many minor forms of worship need not come under consideration. But there are two important religions, still much in evidence, which must not be passed over and the first of these is that of the Jains.

In that great sixth century B. C. which saw the rising of so many great men there lived from 599-527 one Mahavira—"The Great Hero"—also called the Jina or "Victor." He was the son of a minor rajah, married the daughter of another rajah and had one daughter. Like so many natives of India he became a religious ascetic and after eighteen months of meditation proclaimed his doctrines which were that nothing should be worshipped; that one should never pray; but should lead a quiet self-denying life and go about completely nude. After his death there arose a schism over the last mentioned ordinance, some

adhering to nudity until the Mohammedans put a stop to it and insisted on the covering up of the numerous nude images; and the others wearing white garments. The former say that no woman can be saved unless by a super-excellent life she is fortunate enough to be reincarnated as a man, when she gets her chance. The latter group have orders of nuns, for the religion is highly monastic in its character and its founder was really a religious leader surrounded by a body of monks. The Jains object to being called atheistic, but are said to acknowledge no personal god or creator in fact their founder speaking of 'Deity said: "Man! Thou art thine own friend. Why wishest thou a friend beyond thyself?"' The Five Great Vows include no killing nor stealing nor sexual pleasures nor attachments. The cause of all sinful acts is woman and the cause of all misery is the union of the soul with the body, hence the goal of ambition is to free the soul from Karma—the Law of the Deed—so that thus it may be released from all incumbrances and attachments. In this connection the reader may be reminded of the Jain interpretation of the Swastika as described in an earlier chapter. There are about one million Jains described as being mostly well-to-do people and many of them very wealthy.

The Sikh religion with the exception of Judaism and possibly Nestorianism is unique in having created a nation. It is also the last of the great



living religions, since it was founded by Nanak so late a comer as 1469-1539 A. D., in fact he died in the year after that into which Henry VIII crowded several of his nuptial adventures and thus is quite a recent personage.

Nanak belonged to the working classes and the second caste. He abandoned everything for prolonged meditation in the desert during which the primal Brahma appeared to him and told him that he was to be the divine Guru or teacher. After a long silence he emerged with this message to the world that "there is no Hindu and no Mussulman." His teaching is pantheistic; Sat Nam "True Name" being the title of his deity. Salvation in this religion means absorption into this deity, so that here we have to do with another pure pantheism. Following upon Nanak were ten Gurus or chief pontiffs of whom the fifth, Arjan (1581-1606) compiled from the writings of his predecessors and various Sikh writers a work called the Granth which has been added to by various successive Gurus and now is the visible representation of the invisible deity and as such is every morning dressed in costly brocade and placed on a throne under a jewelled canopy. Every evening it is put to bed in a golden couch in a specially consecrated room. It is spoken of as the Granth Sahib.

The sixth Guru, Govind, assumed a sword as a sign of military leadership and from that time

forth the Sikhs became at least as much a military as a religious body. It was, however, the tenth Guru, also known as Govind, who took the name of Singh, i.e. Lion, and ordered every Sikh to do so as they do to this day, delighting in the title of the Lions of the Punjab. This Guru also wrote the last addition to the Granth and it was from that date (1708) that it became the object of worship that it now is.

The Sikh body became a monarchy after this Guru and as such continued until the time of Maharajah Dhuleep Singh who surrendered to the British; handed over to them that historic jewel of the British crown, known as the Koh-i-nor and embraced Christianity. But the Sikhs remain as perhaps the bravest soldiers of the British raj. They are initiated by a sort of baptism, instituted by the tenth Guru, for they drink and are sprinkled with a sweet water, which has been stirred by a sharp sword, in an iron basin. This is called Amrit and is believed to confer purity of life and safety in battle. Besides their pantheism and worship of the Granth, they believe in the transmigration of souls and, unlike the Hindus, have no caste, nor do they consider women to be inferior nor permit infanticide. Vegetarianism is forbidden—they are a fighting race. Their chief religious edifice the Golden Temple at Amritsar is said, after the Taj Mahal, to be the most beautiful edifice in India.

## CHAPTER XIX

THE PHILOSOPHIES—BUDDHA—CONFUCIUS—  
LAO-TSZE—THE STOICS

AT the beginning of this chapter one has with increased emphasis to insist on the cautions uttered at the commencement of the last. "The Buddha of Oldenburg is very unlike the Buddha of Bur-nouf and still less like the Buddha of Senart" says a writer on the subject and those who study the subject and can only do so in English must often find themselves puzzled by the differences of opinion expressed. To begin with we are warned that the whole literature of Buddhism abounds in terms which have no European equivalents and to grasp the terminology of a subject is the first essential to its comprehension. In the case of the scholastic philosophy one may note the mistakes made by persons who have tried to criticise it, without having taken the very considerable trouble necessary to grasp the often very subtle meaning of the terms in which it is expressed.

To discuss the theory of "Matter" and "Form" without knowing what scholasticism means by

each of those words, is to plunge into immediate confusion. Obviously the same must be the case with the Buddhist philosophy if the statement made above is accurate and no doubt it is. But as we are told that, before we can begin to hope to understand the Buddhistic question we must at least be able to read Pali and Chinese, most of us must get on with what we can learn from the works of those who have the linguistic knowledge which we lack.

There has been a good deal of sentimentalism over Buddha but the facts leave no sort of doubt that he was one of the very great spiritual influences of the world. He seems to have been a man of commanding presence, possessed of a deep thrilling voice. He was an honest and indefatigable worker for what he believed to be the good of mankind. Nevertheless things have so worked out that the greater part by far of what is called Buddhism is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Buddha as they are known to us.

Gautama was born 560 B. C. in Kapilastra, the eldest son of a wealthy rajah of the Sakhya clan, hence his title Sakhya-Muni. Let us note his date for it places him in that remarkable period the sixth century before Christ which also saw the birth of Confucius, Lao-Tsze, Zoroaster, Mahavira, and Pythagoras, with Ezekiel amongst the Hebrew prophets. He married at the age of nineteen but had no son for ten years. On the day

of the birth of that son he saw what are known as the Four Sights, namely—an old man; a corpse; a loathsomely diseased person; and an unperturbed ascetic. The result of this was that, without returning to his home, he abandoned his wife and child and all his possessions and spent a life of asceticism for six years. At the end of that time, sitting under what afterwards was to be known as the sacred Bo-tree (a kind of fig) he got enlightenment and changing his name from Gautama or Siddhartha to that of Buddha, or the enlightened one, he went forth into the world to proclaim his message to it.

This is summarised in The Four Noble Truths viz.,

1. All existence entails suffering.
2. Indulgence in inherent and insatiable desires is the cause of this suffering.
3. If, therefore, one gets rid of all desire, one also gets rid of suffering.
4. One must, for a time, live in the world, and while one does, it is necessary to tread the path of right living or The Noble Eightfold Path which consists in right belief; right aspiration; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right endeavour; right thought; and right concentration.

The teachings of other religions against which he mainly inveighed were (1) the sacredness of the Vedic scriptures; (2) the conception of a

metaphysical Supreme Being and (3) the value of prayer.

After a strenuous life he died at the age of eighty in 480 B. C.

The summary above will show that the teachings of Buddha belong to what some have called atheistic religions, a term as already shown of very unsatisfactory nature. In fact his teachings are not a religion but a philosophy and of the teachings of that philosophy there are very contradictory accounts, the Indian and the Chinese, we are told, differing considerably from one another. But his teaching was at least agnostic, for, as we have seen, he allowed of no Supreme God, and, as to the godlets whom he seems to have retained, they were of little consequence since they were all subject, like mankind, to reincarnation. De la Boullaye points out that in this he resembles Epicurus who kept the gods, whilst denying that they had any influence on mankind, and that there is this further resemblance, that both were deified by later generations of followers. Buddha seems certainly to have taught that any belief in the existence of a soul was an illusion. Yet he also seems to have taught, at least to the unlearned, the transmigration of souls and the doctrine of Karma—the law of the deed—that the sum of what a man is and what he has been in previous incarnations is what he is, and that on what he is, depends what he will be in his next birth. That

teaching, however, was not a novelty introduced by Buddha. Salvation which means Nirvana gained by complete elimination of all desire and freedom from the delusion of self, is the goal to be striven for; the deliverance from that load of death which we call life.

When it is attained, as a Pali scripture puts it: "Their hearts are freed from longing of a future life; the cause of their existence being destroyed and no new yearnings springing up within them, they, the wise, are extinguished like this lamp." Thus, it would appear, there is no room for the doctrine of immortality at least of a personal immortality in this teaching. Emphasis is laid on a good life in fact Lilly points out that Kant and Buddha agreed in making the moral law the supreme guide of life and also in claiming that the will is man's distinctive endowment, the only thing he possesses of absolute value.

To turn to practical matters, caste finds no place in this system and life is never to be destroyed. Nevertheless it is permissible to pull a fish out of the water and allow it to die on the bank. But it must not be put out of its misery by the action of man.

Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive  
Officiously to keep alive

as Clough put it though not in relation to Buddhism. Good works acquire merit, but here is a

curious paradox, for, while one acquires merit by building a pagoda—much merit in fact—to repair one which is falling into ruins, only acquires merit for its original builder, which most are not sufficiently altruistic to do. Hence the vast number of ruined pagodas in Buddhistic countries. But there is, I believe, now in existence a society for the restoration of such ruins in Hindustan.

Besides minor differences there are two great schools of thought in Buddhism. The Himayana or Lesser Vehicle which belongs chiefly to Southern Asia is, where pure, much nearer the original than the Mahayana or Greater Vehicle of which a recent writer says that it boxes the compass of philosophy and religion admitting every consoling truth that the rigid doctrine denied or set aside. In it human cravings and needs are met with human hopes and asseverations. It is possible to be a theist or a subjective idealist and yet remain a Buddhist. This school seems to flourish in Japan, China and in Thibet above all where Buddha is regarded as eterfial, almighty, self-existent and the author of all being in fact everything which Buddha himself inveighed against in the conception of a Supreme Being. Hence the innumerable images exposed and prayers offered, both again totally opposed to his teaching. Thus Buddhism begins as a philosophy and an ethic and ends in this school in a kind of theism. It is



the leading example of the fact that no philosophy as such, which is not also a religion, has so far persisted in its pristine purity but has always turned into a religion. But this religion, especially in the northern form, is overlaid by every kind of accretion—devil-worship, magic and polytheism *in excelsis*.

Buddhism for a time was a very intensely missionary religion and one of its great propagators was the pious Buddhistic monarch Asoka who sent his son Mahinda in the third century B. C. to Ceylon to convert that island to Buddhism. Mahinda brought with him a cutting of the sacred Bo-tree which still flourishes as a mighty tree at Anuradhpura amongst the ruins of that once mighty city. It is really due to this missionary zeal that Buddhism still claims so many nominal adherents, for in India, the place of its origin, the number of Buddhists is comparatively speaking small, the millions connected with it being found east of that country in Burma, China, Japan and other lands. A recent writer has shown that in Burma the Buddhistic teachings are a mere veneer to the animistic beliefs of pre-Buddhist times in that country, as well as to the other animistic teachings which came in with the Mahayanist form of Buddhism. Even human sacrifice and cannibalism in a sacramental form exist under the robe of Buddha for a monk, who during life, had been reputed to have been a great sorcerer,

having died, his body was dug up and boiled down into a broth which was believed to be capable of imparting the virtues which he had possessed to those who partook of it. Before passing to the next philosophy some mention must be made of the Jatakas, five hundred and forty seven in number, which are collected in the Pali Buddhist canon of the third century B. C. and are by far the most ancient collection of folk-lore in the world. They are a group of what might be described as mild parables attached to Buddha, the occurrences in each of which happened to a Bodhisattva that is to say to a person who might, by perfect knowledge, attain to the position of a Buddha or enlightened person. They crop up in all sorts of places—in the Bayeux tapestry; in Æsop's fables; in the stories of Uncle Remus; and even in hagiography.

#### LAO-TSZE AND TAOISM

At the end of the Chou dynasty in the sixth century B. C. Chinese beliefs and institutions had fallen into a state of great confusion when there arose Lao-Tsze and Confucius and the former, as somewhat earlier than the latter had better be dealt with first. They met, but as their plans proved to be quite different no coalition was possible and they must be considered separately. Lao was known as "the wise old philosopher" and

there are said to-day to be somewhere about 43,000,000 adherents of his teachings. Both Lao and Confucius wanted to bring order out of disorder in their country, but one may be described as a radical, the other a conservative, "Lao-Tsze the theorist soared into the clouds; Confucius the practical clung to the earth." The former wanted to clear everything away so as to rebuild all things new. The latter wanted to hold on to anything that was good in the existing system and carefully restore the old building instead of constructing a brand-new one.

There was no personal Supreme Being for Lao, but the primordial principle of a form of pantheism, who or which was called Tao, hence the name of the philosophy. His chief maxim was "be good to everybody whether he is or is not good to you," though like some other maxim makers it does not seem that he held by his own teaching when it came to translating it into action.

For the rest his system is a mixture of good with incredibly foolish directions. Never confuse right and wrong, nor seek to obtain anything but the lot portioned out for you. Do not use a short foot or an unfair balance. These are all excellent pieces of advice but what is one to say to the directions that one must not point at a rainbow, spit at shooting stars or weep or spit to the North which are also laid down by the same law-giver? Starting thus as a philosophy and an ethic the

system has turned to one of polytheism, demonolatry and witchcraft. It professes to hate war but teaches that believers are immune from injury in battle and in fact it is stated that this system was at the bottom of the Boxer rebellion some years ago. So that like Buddhism what began as a philosophy, for the Tao principle is almost too misty to be described as a deity, it turns into something quite different, again, as in the case of Buddhism, suffering the accretions of all kinds of baser practices.

### CONFUCIUS

In this case too we have a philosophy which, beginning as a protest against the teachings of religion, ultimately becomes not merely a religion but a mass of superstitions. Confucius 551-479 B. C. was contemporary with, though younger than, Lao-Tsze. He was the youngest of eleven children, married at the age of nineteen and was master of a school which is said to have had three thousand children in attendance.

The system which he taught to his followers was as just mentioned, a philosophy and an ethic and not a religion properly speaking.

He discouraged prayer and any concern in spiritual matters or supernatural beings. Yet he believed in the immortality of the soul, for in addition to enforcing filial piety, he made an-

cestor worship a strong feature in his teachings, and the wide-spread observance of that form of worship in China is largely due to them. "Filial piety" he said "is the root of all virtue and the stem out of which grows all moral teaching." Thus "The Family Constitution" becomes one watchword of the system and "The Middle Way," or opportunism from day to day, another. All will agree that the root doctrine as just given is an excellent pronouncement and Confucius was instant in urging the need of a moral life but there is no divine sanction for it, for there is no system of future punishments and rewards. Thus, though a Supreme Being is here and there mentioned in the Confucian documents, the religious side of the teachings is practically nil.

Such was Confucius himself and such his message but by degrees the usual process commenced and continued. The Emperor—when there were Emperors—being the one conduit between mankind and the Supreme Being, was the source of all heavenly honours and in 665 A. D. one of them conferred on Confucius the title of Supreme Master which need have no more than a mundane significance any more than the title of Perfect Sage added by a later and Taoist Emperor in 1013. It was not until 1907 that he was formally placed on an equality with heaven, but long before that official order, sacrifices had been offered to him—even twice a year officially by

the Emperor—and there were then fifteen hundred of his temples in the land, all of them said to be going to ruin.

Further, in that desire for communion, which, as Jevons says, is the kernel of all religions, the people were in the habit of making straw images of Confucius, pouring wine over them and then drinking it in order that they might share in his wisdom. China had had many other influences before Buddhist missionaries visited it. That religion having made a footing, went from thence with Confucianism to Japan from which islands there came a backwash of Shinto. In a general way it may be said that the religion of the Chinese people is a kind of Buddhism with ancestor-worship and literally hundreds of gods as exemplified by such an edifice as the Temple of Five Hundred Gods. The literati on the other hand are said to hold by the philosophy of Chu-Hsi a sufficiently negative and dreary profession of unfaith, "there is no God, no ruler, no judge, no providence, and the immortality of the soul is a Buddhist mistake." One wonders why, with such a philosophy, it should be considered worth while to do anything else but eat and drink and get what pleasure there may be out of a miserable world. But there seems to be an immense fund of common-sense in the general populace which—as elsewhere—does not attach too much importance to the poses

—for they are very often that—of the intelligentia.

The topic under consideration in this chapter may be further illustrated by a few lines on Stoicism and Platonism—an abstract of a most interesting discussion of the subject in Professor Halliday's erudite work on the Pagan Background of Early Christianity to which I have already expressed my acknowledgments in earlier chapters. Stoicism, he tells us, found in its search amongst the mysteries of the universe sufficient evidence to prove the existence behind these veils of a mind and of purpose. In other words the Stoic reached an idea of the deity through the argument from design. But their deity was immanent and not transcendent, at least in their earlier days. Hence their views were Pantheistic and illustrate once more the close connection between philosophies and pantheism which have led some to include pantheism definitely amongst the philosophies. One distinguished philosopher says that all false philosophies end in Pantheism. And there we must leave that point. Further man's soul was a detached scrap of the Divine essence temporarily inhabiting the prison of the body and when liberated from that, fused once more with the divine essence to which it belonged. Thus the early Stoics attained to no idea of personal immortality, in which they resemble those religions which possess the idea of Nirvana. The

lâter Stoicism of Seneca and Epictetus, follows the example of all philosophies set up in the place of a religion, and becomes one in reality, for as Dill says it "melts into the revived Platonism" i.e., into the Neo-Platonism, a form of religion developed on the basis of the utterances of Plato which were not themselves a religion in the strict sense at any rate, if in any sense. Both Stoics and Neo-Platonists agreed in the essential unity of God and both had to reconcile this with polytheism and did so by identifying the polytheistic deities with Dæmons, which, according to a then widely accepted notion, were intermediate beings or agents who occupied themselves with the affairs of mankind and with the world in which they live. In fact much the same kind of beings as the Pepo of the Bantus described in Chapter II and as other spirits good and bad in other schemes of religion.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS—MAGNA MATER—ISIS

NEXT in interest to the great monotheistic religions, and leading up to the greatest of them, is the group to be discussed in this and the succeeding chapter, the so-called Mystery Religions, dating from the sixth century B. C.; continuing down to the fifth A. D.; and originating chiefly in Phrygia and Thrace. They inaugurated a perfectly new idea namely that a man might belong to a religion which was not that of the state. It must not be supposed that that exactly meant that he became what we should call to-day a dissenter, though indeed the adherents of these sects have had that term applied to them. One thing which marks all of them is their intense syncretism and that made it possible for a man to belong to the state religion and still enjoy his mystery sect. In fact there was no reason why he should not belong to a number of the mysteries as a man may to-day belong to several secret societies. Such was the case with many persons, and Professor Halliday quotes an inscription on an altar as proof that the same man might hold high office

in a number at the same time, for the altar was dedicated "to the Great Gods, the Mother of the Gods and Attis" by one who "was at once Pater Patrum Dei Solis Invicti Mithræ, Hierofanta Hecates, Dei Liberi Archibucobus, Tauribolio criobolioque in æternum renatus" thus being a kind of high-priest of three forms of worship besides having undergone the horrible, but very expensive ceremonies of regeneration by the blood of bulls and goats. Perhaps it was more a new form of worship than a new worship, and there were these two novel and important points that the Mystery religions were voluntary and that they were open to all.

It will not be possible here to do more than offer a sketch of the main features of these religions and to give some account of a few of them. Those who desire a fuller knowledge cannot do better than turn to the pages of Angus (*The Mystery Religions and Christianity*—Scribners) of Cumont (*Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*) and of Halliday of all of which extensive use has been made in what follows. "In primitive religion all men were religious, and mysteries were the religion of the whole people, and not confined to chosen mystæ" says Ramsay and Angus thinks that such was the first stage of the religions we are here concerned with. In the next period these religions persist as those of the aborigines who have survived the waves of invaders

which have passed over their country. Inevitably those invaders would be affected by the beliefs of those whom they had subjugated. The very idea of one town, or one land, one god would cause this. The autochthones must surely be best acquainted with the local deities and how they should be approached. Let us consider a modern example of this, in the custom of some of the peoples of Northern Hindustan who are invaders and whose forefathers had driven the autochthones into the hill countries further north. The first furrow of the plough must be drawn by one of the descendants of the old possessors of the soil who is brought down the day before and spends the night crouching on one of the dolmens which may possibly have been the tombs of his ancestors. In the morning he draws the first furrow and is then ceremonially pelted off the land. The Gods of the earth, if insulted, have been insulted by one of their old friends and ought to understand that the stoning process indicates that the local inhabitants, even if they do go on with the ploughing, are really on their side. The Druid case is also interesting, even if one is not clear whether that form of worship can be called with any accuracy by the name of Mystery. There seems some reason to think that it was the original religion of the neolithic inhabitants of Britain and Gaul. But it became that of the Bronze Age people who had in large measure submerged them

and much later was an object of fear to the early Christians for in the Breastplate of St. Patrick, that famous prayer, we find him begging assistance against the "spells of women, smiths and druids." And further St. Columba, in a striking metaphor, cries out "The Son of God is my Druid." So much for the general effect of these aboriginal religions when encountered by conquerors or immigrants, which Dr. Angus thinks was at the base of the Mystery religions. The next stage is one in which they are associated with purely private organisations in some cases, even in many, tolerated by the states as e.g. the Roman *religiones licitæ*. It may be supposed that during this period the chief adherents would be the foreigners who had perhaps brought the religion with them and natives probably, not of the highest classes, with whom such would be most commonly in contact. In many instances the religions were spread by slaves but in others by merchants. The worship of Cybele entered Athens in the fifth century B. C. as a result of the increase in commerce at that time and in that place, so that there was, in the fourth and third centuries, a flourishing community of worshippers of the Great Mother at Piræus. But in the last phase these oriental exotics won imperial recognition and became state religions. Still following the lead of Dr. Angus we may proceed to consider the characteristics of these forms of worship. In the

first place they were replete with symbolism in their ceremonies especially in their initiation ceremonies horrible though some of them, like the taurobolium (not usually, if ever initiatory itself) were. But lustrations of water, common to many of them, were obviously and inoffensively symbolic. In the next place the mystery teachings did really grasp the problem of answering the urgent questions raised by the increasing sense of sin and its meaning which from that sixth century of which we have been speaking had filled the minds of men. These religions offered a means of reconciliation with an offended Deity. Further along this line they taught a higher and a far more attractive doctrine about the future life and showed how each man might attain to happiness therein. Notice has earlier been taken of the gloomy view of the future life which Greek and Roman eschatology held out. To be going to a position where one would prefer to be alive and the slave of a landless man, was not the kind of idea to lighten the glooms of the death bed. Rebirth for eternity, and a happy eternity under conditions, was a brighter vision. But there was coupled with this teaching that which declared man's responsibility for his own future state—a doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Here it may be well to press the point that these mystery religions were highly individual, unlike the state re-

ligions, for unlike these last, each man's soul was brought directly into contact with his deity.

Again these religions professed to give real information as to the cult-deity and his doings and that, from the second century B. C. at any rate, was a matter which aroused man's curiosity. "Every Mystery-Religion imparted a knowledge of the life of the deity and the means of union with him" says Dr. Angus. The deities of these religions were saviour gods but as Dr. Halliday very clearly shows they differ from the Christian God in this respect that His was a love which was "prepared to go to the limit of self-sacrifice" which was not the case with any of the saviour gods. Besides their symbolism, the dramatic character of these religions is another factor which can by no means be neglected, strong appeal being made through the eye and ear to the imagination. That they were potent in their action none can deny who read the account of the initiation into the cult of Isis given by Apuleius or the paraphrase of it called "God's Orphan" in the charming little book of tales relating to pre-Christian classical religions called "In God's Nursery." "I trod" says the describer of the initiation, "on the very threshold of death, whereunto I had journeyed: and then across the elements did I return; at midnight beheld I the white splendour of the sun in his blazing; gods of heaven and hell I approached and stood before them and adored them

face to face. And now that you have heard my tale, yet can you never understand it." There is no kind of reason to doubt the reality of the impressions made by these initiations nor that there were real and deep religious instincts evoked by it and other ceremonies of these religions. But of course there was the black side, for, in some of them from the commencement and in most at a later period, riotously licentious scenes formed a part of the ceremonies and the purity of the quite early Isaic rites became stained with the worst kind of profligacy. Of these mystery religions there were quite a number, of which the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries are at least familiar as names to most readers. The ramifications of one of them will be discussed in this chapter and others in the next.

In the year 205 B.C. it was urgently necessary that Hannibal should be got out of Italy and, after consulting the Sibylline books Attalus, King of Phrygia, was persuaded to part with the sacred black stone at Pessinus which was brought over to Rome and enshrined there. The stone in question was a meteorite and it represented or, according to Professor Murray, actually was, the Magna Mater or Great Mother of the Gods. She was the first Oriental deity introduced into Rome and her introduction was the last time that the Sibylline books were consulted. Though the goddess—or her symbol—was brought to Rome

and there entempled, her worship was held to be so degrading, that Phrygian priests alone might carry it out, and the inhabitants of Rome must not be present at it. Later on, however, she became the object of worship of many Romans. The conception of the Great Mother seems certainly to go back to the times of the great Minoan civilization and the somewhat later but also great Mycenæan era and the deity was an earth-goddess one of the chthonic deities whom, as we saw, were set in contrast with those of Olympus. With her was associated a lesser male deity representative of the power of reproduction and the whole idea groups itself around the idea of birth, fertility and the powers of the soil. The idea of the Great Mother is in the opinion of some to-day at the bottom of the whole fabric of religion. That is not the theory upheld in this book but there can be no doubt that this worship is very ancient and very wide-spread. Tacitus in his *Germania* describes the worship of Nerthus i.e., Mother Earth, by some of the German tribes. The origin of the name Nerthus is so obscure that it is thought by some that it is a mere epithet, the real name being unutterable. She had an attached male or husband like the Great Mother and may have been a possession, like the sky-god, of the undivided Indo-European race if, as is possible, the horrible goddess Kali, described in an earlier chapter, is this deity under another name. It has recently



been urged that certain ceremonies connected with the worship of this deity seem to have descended to those associated with the goddess Kali to-day. Dr. Angus shews that these chthonic cults differed in many ways from the brighter worship of the Olympians and especially in the matter of sacrifices. In the case of the Olympians there was raised "a high altar on which was burned the god's portion of the sacrifice; the victim devoted to the powers whose habitat was air or sky was lifted off the ground, his head turned towards heaven, and in this posture the throat was cut. To the nether deities the victim's throat was cut with the head earthwards over a hole which received the blood after which the whole victim, a devoted holocaust, was burned as piacular on a low altar or mound of earth. Moreover these chthonic rites were local and private compared with the public and more widely extended Olympian celebrations. Such are the central features of one of the mystery religions but closely mixed up with it were other variants for example the cult of Artemis. The Romans had got Diana from the wood of Nemi and, as Artemis, the same conception was to be found on Olympus—the wood nymph and huntress, chaste and remote. This beautiful figure becomes however confused with the very different "Diana of the Ephesians," anything but remote, and represented with a shower of breasts covering the front of her body—emblems of fertility

which associate her with the great Mother idea. Astarte, if not identical, is closely connected with this deity (and Aphrodite perhaps for both have doves as emblems), the Ashtoreth of the Bible whose attractions were chronically active with the Jews. Sidon was her chief city and thence she went to Carthage as Tanit, and being a huntress goddess became associated with Diana and Artemis. Through all this runs the phenomenon of syncretism which is so very marked a feature of these mystery religions. This gathering together under the form of one mythical character of others from different districts has already been discussed in these pages but may be pursued a little further in the present instance. Astarte is said to have been a moon-goddess, and so, of course, was Diana, and that brings them into relationship with Isis who is represented as crowned with the moon symbol. To tell the tale of Isis, Osiris and Horus here would take too much space and in any case is scarcely germane to the topic under discussion. But that Isis is an excellent instance of syncretism cannot be disputed. Apuleius says that "Isis of the thousand names" reveals herself as "parent of nature, mistress of all the elements, the first-born of the ages . . . whom the Phrygians adore as the Pessinuntian Mother of the Gods, the Athenians as Minerva, the Cyprians as Venus, the Cretans as Dictynian Diana, the Sicilians as Proserpina, the Eleusin-

ians as Demeter, others as Juno or Bellona, others as Hecate or Rhamnusia, while the Egyptians and others honour me with my proper name of Queen Isis." To some extent, Professor Halliday tells us, this syncretic idea was part of a settled policy of fusion by identification of Greek and Oriental gods. Thus the religion of Serapis, who had a very celebrated temple at Pozzuoli near Naples, was an artificial creation constructed from Greek and Egyptian elements by the first Ptolemy and the worship of Zeus at Antioch was established by the process of identifying him with Baal.

The worship of Isis, to return to that goddess, takes a high place amongst the mystery religions for the loftiness of its conceptions and the purity of its teachings, so much so that Tertullian even holds its worshippers up as examples for the Christians of his day. Moreover it, like some of its fellows, was marked by practices of even extreme ascetism. But like those same fellows it degenerated into extreme licentiousness, for, as St. Augustine, who knew these religions first-hand, puts it, their moral teachings might be high but their practices were wholly loose. And in fact Tiberius drove the worshippers of Isis from Rome after the incident of the seduction of a Roman lady by a man masquerading as Anubis at one of their ceremonies.

As the Roman legions carried the Imperial

Eagle to all parts of the then known globe, so also they carried these exotic religions.

In far-off Britain there are many memorials of them, for example an altar with its dedication in Greek which reads, "Thou seest me, an altar of Astarte, Pulcher set me up"—Pulcher, it may be supposed, being then a member of some auxiliary corps of soldiers.

As to Isis in the days of Græco-Roman influence in Petra, that "rose-red city half as old as time" there was a temple to that deity who was also honoured by a great statue in its midst.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MYSTERY RELIGIONS—DUALISM—ZOROASTER— MITHRAS—MANICHÆANISM

THE existence of evil has always been a difficulty in religious systems and the solution of that problem offered in a number of cases is a frank dualism such for example as appears in the narrative of Osiris and the wicked Set amongst the Egyptians. To take another instance amongst the Loango, a Bantu tribe, we find belief in Zambe, the Creator and the author of all that is good. But side by side with him is Zambe-a-n'bi who is all that is bad.

Amongst the North Amerindians twins are born at a birth one good, the other evil. The Hurons call them Ioskeha and Tawiscara and say that they were the children of Ataentsic who was expelled from heaven while in the Algonquin mythology, according to Père Charlevoix the twins are Manabozho and Lafitau. The dualism is here in evidence though the good and evil beings are of a lower rank in the celestial hierarchy than in the instance now to be dealt with.

Zoroaster or Zarathushtra was a historic per-

sonage who lived in the sixth century B. C. another of the great men of that stirring time. He was born 660 and died 583. He is known to have had three contemporary wives and his memory has undergone the same exaltation that took place with Buddha and Confucius, for, legends having grown around him, he came to be worshipped together with the deity whom he had proclaimed namely Ahuramazda. His was avowedly the first attempt to found a universal religion, for up to its time all had been local and circumscribed to a tribe or a city. It is understood that the Parsis to-day who follow this belief are not merely ungiven to proselytism, but, even more, refuse to admit converts to their fold. The religion is Monotheistic yet dualistic and in this manner. Ahura Mazda the "much knowing spirit" is the god of justice, truth, and of all good and virtuous things and actions. Moreover he is the creator of all things. But co-eternal with him is Angra Mainyous commonly called Ahrimanes who is the spirit of evil and falsehood. Such is the opposition between these two that when the former makes any good and useful thing, all the efforts of the ruler of Droug, the dismal land in which Ahrimanes presides, are put forth to bring it to naught. Ahura Mazda was the giver of laws and his priests were the Magi—great observers of the stars and in fact the wise men from the East who followed the star to Bethlehem. When Ahura

Mazda was represented it was as a winged circle sometimes combined with the upper portion of a human being robed and crowned with a tiara. Thus he is represented on the great rock of Behistun, near Ecbatana in Persia, where in B. C. 516 Darius recorded his victories. And again on the rock of Nakshi Ristan, where the Sassanid dynasty of Persian monarchs inscribed their deeds, Ardashir (212-241 A.D.) is represented as being blessed by Ahura Mazda to whom he presents a ring.

After the time of Alexander and under Parthian influences this religion turned to worship of the sun, previously an emblem only. In 637 A.D. the Moslems, as far as they could, expelled all Zoroastrians from Persia where to-day but a few Guebres retain that belief. The exiles entered India and have there continued as the Parsis for the most part a wealthy and certainly a generous folk. They resent being called fire-worshippers and the perpetual sacred fire which they maintain is to them a symbol as it was to the Magi who kept a similar flame alight centuries ago. It is to this religion a crime to touch the dead unless the hands are wrapped in sackcloth and then the moving must be carried out by two persons at the same time. Further it is an inexpiable crime to burn a dead body for it defiles the sacred element. Nor can it be buried or thrown into the river lest the other two elements be defiled. So

it must either be very thickly embedded in wax before interment or, preferably, exposed on the summit of a lofty Tower of Silence where the birds of the air and the operations of nature dispose of it. The soul wanders round the body for three days, after which it goes to the Hall of Mithras to be judged; it must cross the narrow Bridge of Chinwad which spans the gloomy horrors of Hell. In this perilous transit the evil fall off the bridge into the abyss below whilst the good cross over.

However, in the end of all things, when Ahura Mazda achieves his final and inevitable victory over his enemy of Droug, Hell will be emptied and its inhabitants will enter Heaven. So that it is a universalist religion and capable of being described as Monotheistic from the fact that in the end the good god—the object of worship—will be triumphant.

One of the most remarkable of religions was that of Mithras which has close relations with that just dealt with and, like it, was of Persian origin. At one time it was or seemed to be a dangerous rival of the nascent Christianity, an idea accentuated by a somewhat foolish remark of Renan for this is perfectly clear that a form of worship which was restricted to males and excluded the devout female sex, could never have come to be a world religion. Nevertheless, as it was, it went wherever the Roman Empire carried



her eagles, from the nearest approach to the Equator up to the Roman Wall in Britain which was the *Finis Imperii* in that direction. As a modern writer puts it more forcibly "among the storms and mists of the northernmost country known to Rome, Mithras was adored with the same rites as in the line of forts which stretched along the blazing line of the *Sâharâ*." And through all that vast area have been found here and there the underground resorts of the men who followed the Mithraic rites, the Mithraea all of them on the same plan and of the same capacity namely one hundred persons. Some of these Mithræa were caves but the rest were subterranean by excavation and, whilst they recall the cave into which Mithras dragged the bull, before slaying it, it has been suggested that the descent below the surface of the earth in order to enter the chapel, also betokened the necessary passage through a symbolic death into a new life, just as in the Orphic Mysteries, the initiate was buried up to the neck in the earth. Returning to the accommodation at Ostia, the port of Rome an important and populous place, where there have been found six Mithræa there cannot have been, for that supply of chapels, more than six hundred adherents. The conclusion is that whilst the religion went everywhere it need not necessarily have held a very great proportion of the population, even of the male population. Like other religions which we

have been considering Mithraism was exceedingly synthetic. Cumont, to whose studies we owe most of our information, says "an analysis of the constituent element of Mithraism, like a cross section of a geological formation, shows the strata of this composite mass in their regular order of deposition. The basal layer of this religion, its lower and primordial stratum, is the faith of the ancient Iran from which it took its origin. Above this Mazdean substratum was deposited in Babylon a thick sediment of Semitic doctrines and afterwards the local beliefs of Asia Minor added to it their alluvial deposits. Finally a luxuriant vegetation of Hellenic ideas burst forth from this fruitful soil and partly conceals from view its true original nature." Mithraism was a comparatively late religion and flourished most abundantly during the early ages of Christianity, especially after the Emperor Commodus had been initiated into its secrets.

That it had superficial resemblances to Christianity in some of its ceremonies is admitted, but far too much has been made of this and that has been shown in a number of works for example those of Cumont and in Patterson's *Mithraism and Christianity*. To pursue the point here would take us too far but as an example it may be said that the bloody and brutal rite of the taurobolium has been likened to the Christian baptism—a ceremony performed once in a while; whose efficacy

lasted but for twenty years; and one which was only possible for wealthy persons, to one which was simple and clean; compulsory on all and unrepeatable. Again in one of the grades the neophyte was branded on the forehead by a hot iron a ceremony which has been suggested as the prototype of confirmation where the forehead is anointed with oil. But enough of these fancies, what does strike one in connection with Mithraism is its great likeness to the secret societies dealt with previously and especially with what an outsider surmises to be the character of Freemasonry, for in both there were secret ceremonies impressive regalia and grades with passwords. It has been even held by some that modern Freemasonry is the lineal descendant of Mithraism, just as it has been held to have come down from the builders of the Temple at Jerusalem or even earlier. There appears to be no historical evidence for either of these claims. But there have probably always been secret societies perhaps even amongst the cave-dwellers; there always will be such; and there never will be any difficulty in finding resemblances and thus claiming affiliations between them. At any rate Mithras was said to have sprung from a rock i.e., the firmament of heaven looked on, as so many of the ancients looked upon it, as a solid vault. According to another view, the idea arises from that of the sun rising behind mountains. He represented, so

it seems certain, the sun at its mid-day height for he is always accompanied in the sculptured representations by two attendants one on his right hand, the other on his left, known as Cauti and Cautopati, one bearing a torch erect—the rising sun—the other depressed—the setting. But they had other affiliations, for Cauti, as well as representing the rising sun and thus the morning, was marked with the sign of the Bull in the Zodiac and thus indicated Spring. Cautipati, who was marked by the Scorpion, represented the setting sun, evening and Winter. Figures of these two adorned the Mithræa where however the great object of adoration was the sculptured tablet showing the slaying of the Bull. Cumont claims that the dominance of this idea proves that the tale originated with a pastoral people where cattle were important and the slaughter of a wild bull would be in no way derogatory to the character of a god. The slaying of the bull was for the benefit of fertility and thus of mankind and indeed in one sculpture wheat is represented as flowing from the wound and not blood. Mithras dragged the bull, the first object created by Ahura Mazda, to his cave and then plunged his knife into his neck standing across the animal clad in a tunic and wearing a Phrygian cap. All sorts of things good for man sprang from the blood of this victim and Ahrimanes naturally sent all sorts of evil things, the ant, the scorpion and the ser-

pent to drink it up and so to prevent it from fertilising the earth and these are represented in the sculptured presentations which seem to have acted as altar pieces in every Mithræum.

These could in some cases be swung round so as to expose a scene on the reverse showing Mithras and the sun-god reconciled over the bull.

Another remarkable figure which was to be found in the Mithræa was that of Chronos the lion-headed, here representing "Aion, eternal time which is Destiny, the source and end of all things. His lion's head represents Time which devours all things; his wings denote the swift flight of Time; he holds the sceptre and the thunderbolt of power; and often the keys of heaven; the serpent, which is sometimes twined round his body, may represent the sun's sinuous course through the ecliptic, and the signs of the zodiac are often figured on his dress." (Halliday.)

Mithraism was a dualistic religion like Zoroastrianism from which it descends. There was a good deity and in conflict with him an evil one. The duty of man was to aid the former in his struggle with the latter, and he might feel helped in his conflict by the thought that good must finally triumph. Meantime there *was* a conflict and an honourable one and for that thing alone it was a religion that commended itself to a soldier always confronted by the possibility of a

physical conflict and a soldier's religion it seems very largely to have been and thus it was carried to all parts of the Roman Empire. The early Christian Fathers regarded it as a diabolical imitation of their own ceremonies, for, as already mentioned, there were at least superficial resemblances, and when they had the power to do so, they destroyed everything that they could find belonging to the religion. In their own time they were doubtless justified in this policy since, above all things, they desired to close any avenue by which the pagan might return to the paganism for which he often yearned as we gather from inscriptions on "purified" temples re-devoted to pagan rites during the time e.g. of Julian the Apostate. But none the less it almost brings tears to the eyes of the enquirer when he learns of the burning of those two great volumes of Mithraic teaching which doubtless contained accounts of all those events represented in panels around the bull tablet as to which and their meaning we know nothing though the surmises have been many and various, not to say, at times, rash.

To conclude this portion of the subject something must be said about Manichæism another derivative from Zoroastrianism—so it is usually thought. There is the initial difficulty of deciding whether it was what one may properly call an Oriental religion like Mithraism or whether it was an early heresy thrown off from Christianity.

Dr. Burkitt, whose work on the subject is the latest and most important contribution to it, concludes that in the main St. Ephraim of Edessa was correct when he believed that the system of Mani was "a fantastic reproduction of the heretical Christian philosopher Bardaisan and the heretical Christian churchman Marcion." In the next chapter the matter of these heresies must be touched upon though very briefly and as a heresy and not a direct Oriental religion but little need be said about Manichæism here, though it is of interest for many reasons. It held the powerful mind of St. Augustine of Hippo for years and much of his Confessions is occupied by accounts of his relation to it and to its doctrines.

Further it held a place in the world in spite of much persecution for a thousand years from the time that it was proclaimed in Ctesiphon on March 20th A.D. 242. Doubtless that was at least in part due to its method of tackling the problem of the existence of evil by a dualistic solution. And it continued in spite of the fact that its teaching is extremely complicated and difficult to understand for the two forces good and evil seem to be more concerned with things than with men, so that, as it has been put, whilst men to-day rejoice in legislation against river pollution because it benefits mankind, the Manichæan would have looked upon it with favour because it cleansed the water itself. It was the light im-

prisoned in the bodies of men and women and struggling to be free that attracted the sympathy of Manichæans, not the men and women themselves. The Manichees began with the Two Roots or Principles—those of the Light and the Dark—and then went on to the Three Moments—the Past, the Present and the Future. In the Past, the Dark raided the Light, and got mingled with it as it still is in the Present, but the conquest is not complete and, in the Future, the Dark will be got rid of and the Light alone reign. It is the dualistic explanation we have become familiar with under another guise, for it will be noted that the Dark and the Light are to one another as Ahrimanes to Ahura Mazda. What is probably a second hand quotation from a work of Mani sums up the general idea thus—"the difference between the two Principles is like that between a King and a Pig: Light dwells in a royal abode in places suitable to its nature, while the Dark, like a pig, wallows in mud and is nourished by filth and delights in it." The religion of Manes can perhaps scarcely be included amongst the Mystery religions as that of Mithras certainly can but there is no question but that it falls into the dualistic category.



## CHAPTER XXII

### MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS—JUDAISM—CHRISTIANITY—ISLAM

To conclude even a modest work like this without notice of Judaism and Christianity would be absurd; to attempt any account of them equally so.

As to the former all educated persons are well aware that the foundation stone of the belief is and has always been a stern monotheism. "Hear oh Israel! the Lord, thy God is One God." Many an effort was made to break away into polytheism and idolatry and many a time were such efforts turned aside by the stern utterances of the remarkable series of Prophets whom history records for us; whose writings form so much of the Old Testament. As to the special forms of worship and ceremonies of this religion they are before us to-day and no account will be attempted of them here.

Christianity is also before us in the several hundred varieties which to-day exist under that compendious title, and to make any attempt to

describe them would be wholly impossible and most undesirable since it needs must introduce polemical considerations which it has been the effort of the author to exclude from this book. In general it may be said that Christianity differs from Judaism, the rock out of which it was hewn, by its belief in the Blessed Trinity, the Second Person of which, Jesus Christ being the name by which we know Him, was incarnated by the power of the Third Person, the Holy Spirit, in the Virgin Mary, was made man and suffered on the cross for the redemption of mankind, subsequently rising from the dead and, after some further stay upon this earth, returning to Heaven. Such without dispute are the cardinal doctrines of the belief.

But quite early in its history came differences of opinion as to these beliefs which led to the formation of what are called heresies in relation to the main stream of the faith. One of these (in all probability) was Manichæism which so completely detached itself as to form what may very properly be called an entirely distinct religion. There were others, also, of early date, which turned upon the exact conception of the nature of Christ. One of these formed the Nestorian secession which, starting in Chaldea and Mesopotamia, formed a perfectly separate church, at one time even highly missionary, for it spread into China, where a stone, "The Nestorian

Monument" near a former capital of the Empire, dates back, according to the inscription engraved upon it, to the reign of T'ai-tsong (627-649 A. D.). This monument records the introduction, into China of the Nestorian religion from Persia its headquarters.

The Nestorians in Persia and in Turkey, forming what is almost a separate people as well as a distinct body of believers in one doctrine, are to-day the chief strength of this religion. There are others in Malabar and elsewhere but everywhere they are much shrunk in numbers from what they were at their zenith. A directly opposite view to that of the Nestorians was—and is—that taken by the Monophysites, who persist also to-day especially in Abyssinia, where their very ancient church stands by doctrines, condemned like those of the Nestorians, by Church Councils. Their ceremonies are curious and interesting and include sacred dances said to be of the kind danced before the ark by David, whose descendants the Abyssinians claim to be through his relations with the Queen of Sheba. Further a model of the Ark of the Covenant finds a place in these ceremonies and thus attaches them to Judaism from which Christianity derived. Later in the history of Christianity came the break, once temporarily healed, but afterwards again to take place and remain unhealed to this day, between East and West, leaving the Catholic

Church, with its head the Pope, apart from the Holy Orthodox or Eastern section. Then came the separation from the Catholic Church of the various Protesting Bodies and further dissidences therein which bring us to the condition with which we are familiar in these days and of which no more will be said.

Latest of all comes Islam, the last great religion to be founded and one which was definitely designed to combat Christianity.

Mohammed its founder was born at Mecca A.D. 570 and died 632. After years of visions and unsuccessful preaching he fled from Mecca, with one only companion fearing for their lives, and hid in a cave some few miles off where he eluded those who pursued him. It was the lowest ebb of his fortunes which from that moment started to improve and continued to succeed till his death. The flight took place in 622 and that great epoch in the history of the founder of Islam is known as "The Hegira" and is the starting point of the calendar of Islam just as the birth year of Christ is that of Christendom.

Absolute monotheism was the fundamental doctrine of Mohammed and forms the first clause in the six pledges of Akaba. We will not worship any but the one God. This is followed by pledges to abstain from stealing, adultery, infanticide and slander. Finally it was made obligatory to obey the Prophet, i.e., Mohammed in

anything that is right. Other marked features in the belief may be briefly indicated. It is intensely fatalistic. *Kismet*—"it is destiny"—is a root idea and naturally assists in producing a body of fine fighting men for as one cannot die until one must, and must when one's time comes, the warrior is invincible and unkillable until the moment arrives when death must come from the enemies' hands. And the religion is a definitely militant one for the Koran urges on the faithful the duty of subduing the Christian world and compelling it to become Moslem on pain of death. Belief in a general resurrection and judgment and a system of post-mortem rewards and punishments are inculcated. The punishment of Hell is not unlike that of Christian teaching but the joys of Paradise are *sui generis*. The pious will be told by the Lord to "eat and drink with good digestion, for that which ye have done." Further they are to be wed to "large-eyed maids." "Around them shall go eternal youths, with goblets and ewers and a cup of flowing wine. No headaches shall they feel therefrom nor shall their wits be dimmed. And fruits such as they deem the best, and the flesh of fowl as they desire, and bright and large-eyed maids like hidden pearls, a reward for that which they have done." So the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, no part of which was written by the Prophet but which seems to have been compiled by his immediate

successor Abu-Bekr from Mohammed's sayings. Polygamy is another noticeable point for Mohammed allowed every Moslem four wives in addition to concubines, though he is said to have dispensed himself from the regulation forbidding more than four. The Saracen Empire at one time spread over a considerable part of Europe including practically the whole of the Iberian peninsula and, but for the stubborn resistance at different times of Charles Martel and of John Sobieski, might have swamped the whole continent. That is part, however, of secular history. To-day there are very large numbers of Mohammedans, for example somewhere about seventy millions in India alone, so that the movement started by Mohammed has by no means come to an end.

Amongst those who do not keep much in touch with foreign affairs or with the matters dealt with in this book, it may be noticed that two misconceptions occasionally are apt to arise in relation to this religion.

The first is that Islam after all is not a matter of much importance. Nothing could be a greater mistake than that. It is true that for the moment at least there is not the pressure upon Europe which was exerted when Vienna was the main bastion of the Oesterreich or Eastern Kingdom, the then great Austria, shorn to a mere wraith of its former greatness since the war. But Islam

is a real and most important factor in the world and any day may become one of surpassing interest.

The second is the misconception which some people seem to have that Islam is a kind of Paganism. Nothing could be further from the truth for it may even be said that Islam is a Christian heresy like Manichæism or Arianism. It arose in Christian times of course, and was a definite attack upon Christianity even though it is true that personages in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament are held in a certain respect by it. In point of fact all the great doctrines which were enunciated by Mohammed are to be found in the corpus of contemporary Christianity such as God as the Father of man and as supremely good; the doctrine of immortality with a future life of happiness or the reverse; the equality of the souls of men in the eyes of God; and the brotherhood of mankind.

Of course it should also be remembered that, though to-day it does not possess that distinction, there was a time when it was associated with the most advanced learning of the period. For example amongst its adherents, at the time of Saracen domination in Spain, were many of the most learned men of the day, the introducers to European peoples of the works of Aristotle. All of which things should make a study of Islam and

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its teachings and doings on a much wider scale than is possible here, an object of interest to those anxious to make themselves acquainted with world history and world problems.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### IN CONCLUSION

SOME attempt must be made to estimate the general significance of the facts which have been set forth in the foregoing chapters as well as to indicate, what seem to the author at any rate, some of the most important conclusions to be drawn from them. To the author—for of course there may be others who will be very far from agreeing with what is now to be set down.

We must agree to differ but at any rate the reasons will be given for the conclusions to be formulated.

In the first place then one thing is so clear that there will be no contest of opinion about it. Man is a religious being—"a religious animal" as someone has defined him. There is no such thing as an atheistic race nor, so far as we know has there ever been. No man who has had a proper training in thinking can or would call himself an atheist—the appellation is claimed only by the imperfectly educated who think it rather a distinction to differ in opinion from the overwhelming mass of mankind.

The reason why the educated man must avoid the term is that it implies that satisfying proof has been found for the non-existence of a Supreme Being. To produce such proof is and must always remain utterly impossible. That there are people who cannot bring themselves to believe that there is sufficient proof for the existence of such a Being we are all well aware. But they are not atheists and few of them would claim to be: they are agnostics.

None the less these people are in a very small minority a mere drop in the vast ocean of persons professing a belief in some higher power, in other words, in the sense of this book, possessed of some kind of a religion. For another fact, which is not open to doubt or dispute, is that the overwhelming majority of the human race not merely possesses a religion but is constantly in its atmosphere since it permeates their lives and determines their actions. In this matter it is important to get the proper perspective and to do this we must step outside our own circle of culture—the Eur-American or “white man” culture—for a moment and consider the other races, far more numerous, of mankind. There is no doubt that, as it has been put, religion is the life of the primitive races. And not merely of the primitive races for the ancient civilisations of China, India, Persia and so on are in the same case. That disposes of the majority of the human race. Let

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us turn to our own branch of it of which we naturally think most, if we think of the rest at all. What is the general feature of our culture? If you wanted to use one word which would at once summon up a picture of the entire complex of that culture, what would that word be? Ethnologists will tell you that the reply is—Sunday. Where you get a certain disposition of Sunday even if it is only as a day of rest and amusement there you find with it a certain culture-complex which is that of the white races. No one will dispute that fact nor the other fact that we owe Sunday to Christianity and that Christianity is in fact the religion attaching to that culture. Here again let us get the right perspective for we are apt to get a wrong one from the fact that the exceptions are generally so much more striking, not to say strident, than the rule. If we were to judge from the papers we should be driven to the conclusion that such a thing as an undisrupted family is practically unknown in the United States, every hearth having been the scene of at least one divorce, whereas, as everybody knows, there are millions of contented couples and united families. There is fuss and notoriety about the others while Darby and Joan, unless they figure as the heroes of a golden wedding, excite no attention. Similarly with the religious side. It is the fussy people—often notoriety hunters who are forever wearing their lacerated re-

ligious hearts on their sleeves and proclaiming their dismal doctrine. Of course there are also a number of quiet persons who do not and cannot believe though they are not for ever shouting it into the ears of the public.

These people in many cases regret their inability to believe what many of their friends believe but they are honest with themselves and find that they cannot. But taking both these classes together and adding to them those who have been brought up even in nominally Christian countries as pagans—and there are such—all these do not amount to anything but a small minority of the “white” or Sunday culture complex. That is I think an indisputable fact and the net result of what has been said is that the overwhelming majority of the human race has some kind of religion or another. Hence the person who has none is the exception and may, if he thinks it worth while, plume himself on not being as other men are. If it is true that *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, then religion is a thing necessary for mankind.

But, it may be said, surely there are lots of good people, living edifying lives who neither practise nor profess belief in any religion? No doubt; though the number again is small, infinitesimally small, when we get things into right perspective. And these people are what the late Mr. Devas in his “Key to the World’s Progress”

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most acutely designates as post-Christians. They have the raiment of Christianity; they wear the uniform though they have left the ranks or perhaps never even belonged to them. For those excellent characteristics which they eminently possess are not the result of nature but of Christianity, and, but for the Christianity which went before, these post-Christians would never have been the good exemplary citizens which they are. It is not uncustomary to hear people talk about "simple natural virtues;" most ignorantly, for nature has no class for teaching virtues either sexual, personal or otherwise and that must be obvious to any one who has made a study of it. At any rate the exception which has here been brought forward by some suppositious opponent has no substance in it. Man needs a religion and a religion he will have, and if he cannot find his way into a good religion he will at least quite frequently stumble into a bad one. For there are good and bad religions. Yes, I suppose it will be urged, "orthodoxy is your doxy and heterodoxy is everybody else's doxy." You are begging the question as usual as to what is "good" and "bad." Well it is not necessarily so. Let us develop this matter a little. In our own culture complex the people who go to church on Sunday, no matter what denomination they may belong to, expect at any rate that their minister will bring their thoughts or try to bring them more into

unison with the great realities and above all lead them to a better comprehension and service of their Maker when they are assembled to worship. As a least common denominator that description may pass and will not I think be challenged. Even the prosperous merchant not specially interested in religion but, in a general way at least, favourable to it, who frequents some place of worship would expect something of the kind indicated. But there are other religions and have been where the highly respectable and exceedingly wealthy and doubtless well satisfied Carthaginian merchant—for example—wended his way to church knowing that the ceremony at which he was about to assist would consist in his minister bringing in a wailing infant and proceeding to broil it on a large bronze gridiron. I call the first kind of religion “good” and the second “bad” and if you disagree with me, well then we must continue to differ. Still again *securus judicat orbis terrarum*—the ordinary unsophisticated world would I think agree with the classification. Now there are just those two classes of religions and in the one case God is worshipped whilst in the other it is a Devil of some kind. For a few moments it will be interesting to consider the latter class. At least at many ages of the world’s history there have been men and women whose attitude definitely was “Evil be thou my good.” It is not necessary now to discuss the question as to

whether there is or is not a personal Devil or whether there are or are not spirits, evil or otherwise, around us, though unseen. What admits of no doubt is that the people just alluded to did believe in such things and did deliberately turn aside from all ideas of God and proceed to worship those evil beings in whom they believed, with the object of obtaining the earthly rewards which they coveted. Such were the witches of bygone days. Of course in the Salem business for example there was wild credulity, as much on the side of Cotton Mather by the way as on the other. There was even more wild hysteria and there was that mad love for notoriety which will bring such curious things to pass. But set all these aside, no one who looks carefully into the matter can doubt that there were men and women who believed in Satan and worshipped him in the hope that he would give them their heart's desire.

Faust and Mephistopheles is a tale and an old one but it has substance behind it. And if the stories are true, and they seem unfortunately to be so, of the blasphemous parodies of the most sacred service of the Catholic Church carried out by decadents in Paris, and perhaps elsewhere, then there again we have an instance to-day of men turning deliberately to the worship of the evil principle.

Why they should so act is a matter for dis-

cussion in a work on psycho-pathology not here. Another great group of religions all including voodoo or something of the kind and belonging by origin to Africa may be classed under the same head and amount in ordinary language to devil-worship and the same may be said for the cruel old worships of the Aztecs, Mayas, Carthaginians and Druids.

Of all of these one thing may be said—they are none of them religions of the simple, primitive races, nor are any of them religions of the most highly cultured. Here one must pause for a moment to consider the older civilisations. What about the Carthaginians? They were a very wealthy, prosperous community, no doubt, but wealth does not necessarily at any rate mean high culture and the Carthaginians had none of that—*Punica fides* was another word for “the scrap of paper” attitude—nor did the prosperous merchants produce any from their ranks whose names are to be found in the roll of honour of art or literature. They made money; they watched the baby grillings; they hired soldiers and sailors to fight for them; and they tricked their enemies whenever and wherever they could. They were not at the lowest levels; they had attained to that of the voodooists, who are sophisticated enough to be brutal.

The Amerindians included the nations mentioned above, which were of higher culture com-



plexes than the great majority of the tribes, and it may be added of far more brutal character. The great majority of the tribes leant but little to bloody sacrifices and still less frequently to those of human beings. The Aztecs and the Mayas had a very much higher culture though it must be noted that it was in no way the equal of the contemporary civilisation of Europe. Still it was far the highest on the American Continent, and again we must recall the curious fact that it is with such relatively high cultures that these horrible traits of worship are associated and the same is true, as far as we can know anything about that shadowy folk, of the Druids.

And there we must leave this problem of the "bad" religions, the result of decadence it is urged in this book and due to that corrupting influence which man exerts on religion when he begins to add excrescences. One race alone stuck to the idea of one God, a Deity jealous of any alien worships and that was the Hebrew race. But there again that race was always looking with longing eyes at other gods and forms of worship and sometimes making bolts in their direction. Prophet after prophet thundered against this desertion of the one true God and as a race they held to their belief. But they are an example of the fatal propensity in man to deface his religion with accretions and thus degrade it.

The final point on which something it seems

to me should be said is the position of Christianity. Is it just one amongst a number of religions or is it the true religion, the fine flower of belief?

Of course there are many who will answer in the first way, but perhaps they have not looked at the question from every angle.

Let us approach it historically for a moment. The old state religions were not of the kind to hold mankind—they had no personal application. Vesta and Janus and the little comfortable home *numina* could not have—at any rate turned out not to have—any real holding power. Mankind wanted something more than that and for a time he thought he had got at it in the Mystery religions which began to creep into Europe from Phrygia and the Orient generally in the sixth century B. C. and of which an account has been given in earlier chapters.

They at least introduced a personal element into religion; they showed a method for the ridding of himself from the burden, then beginning to be felt intolerable, of sin, by mankind; they offered as a result of a lifetime of honourable strife in some cases, a happy future life as a reward. But they failed, for again man broke the thing which he had made by corrupting it. Then came Christianity with the same personal promise but this time with a Founder Who it was claimed had died for those whom He came to call to

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Himself. Here was a religion which made the same promise of a reward for a hard life of struggle and turning aside from evil; which contained those services of sacrament and communion which, as Jevons has put it, have always been the kernel of every religion; which answered in other ways to the needs of the human race. It started amongst the lower orders and amongst the despised Jews too. It was taught by a body of men of lowly origin like their Master and Founder—and necessarily of little education. A cowardly lot too, until, according to their own explanation, two incidents occurred which utterly transformed them. The first was their own complete assurance that their Founder who had died, had risen from the dead and remained amongst them for a time until He ascended into Heaven, as they put it, or in other words disappeared from their sight. The second was, as they again believed, the coming upon them of that Holy Spirit which their Master had promised them when he was with them on earth. Look at their statements as you will, there is no doubt about two things—the cowards became as bold as lions and the uneducated began to speak and write with fluency and learning. That is a mere statement of history now not seriously doubted by anybody i.e. that such were the statements of the persons concerned and such the results following on what they believed to be facts. And

that was the story that transformed the world for that again as a matter of historic fact, it is clear that it did. And it may be asked how it did that if it was all a myth or a collection of fairy-tales told by a small group of humble peasants? Paul? Yes; but he was a later addition. Moreover how do you account for his accession to Christianity? It was a-matter which greatly puzzled William James as it must everybody else who refuses to accept what the person chiefly concerned had to say about it. But the rest were not Pauls in education; that is clear.

At any rate from the cellars Christianity crept up to higher levels until, when the nerveless hand of the Roman Empire could no longer hold the reins which it had held with such benefit to mankind for many years, it was the Christian Church which took them up and saved civilisation. That again is an historical fact which no one will contest. And through the ages it was that Church which led the resistance of the peoples of Europe to the dangers from Saracens, Huns and Turks meaning roughly speaking the imposition of Islam on Christian folk. To discuss Atilla and his Huns and the doings of Bishop Lupus and Pope Leo; of Tarik the Saracen and Charles Martel; of Sobieski and the victory of Vienna is quite out of the scope of this book and in any case a matter so complicated as to require a volume to set it out properly. And one must turn

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from it to the consideration of questions constantly asked and never more clamant than since the war. Why has Christianity not effected more than it has? Why did the last war with all its horrors and brutalities break out and amongst nominally Christian peoples? Where was what ought to have been the restraining power of Christianity? We are all familiar with these enquiries.

In the first place to answer a question by a question: are you quite clear that it is Christianity and not so-called Christians who have failed? Let us look at the matter from that point of view for a moment. Man has free will and can use or misuse his powers and advantages. Religion has no coercive powers but can only point the way and endeavour to persuade man to walk in it. He can choose whether he will or not. Further the good that has been done and the great things which have been achieved by even a long line of good administrators may be with dreadful rapidity undone by even one powerful and thoroughly evil-minded or even misguided though well-meaning person in high place. Instances of that will be familiar to all of us and will show how serious and prolonged a set-back such a person can cause. Nor is it necessary to pile up instances of cases where amongst those of princely rank, at times when such were able to achieve more of evil, if not more of good, than those of

to-day, there were to be found, even amongst those professing Christianity, some, who for their own base purposes and in pursuit of their own selfish aims, have betrayed their trust and dragged the religion which they were supposed to support in the mire behind them.

And, though it is a shameful, it is none the less a necessary confession that amongst the sworn servants of Christianity, its prelates and ministers, have from time to time been found men as bad as any in the lay ranks and with far less excuse. All this is however, merely to say that there have at all times and in all places—even amongst the Apostles—been bad men who have been the odium, the disgrace and the disaster of the cause or causes which they professed to champion. Christianity cannot be blamed for such, nor condemned because they have refused to follow her precepts which she has no power to insist upon, her kingdom not being of this world. At any rate it is suggested that before dismissing Christianity as useless, effete and ineffectual the matters just mentioned should be taken into account as well as the few remaining points which seem worthy of consideration. They have been set forth a thousand times but remain none the less true. In the first place is it not true that those who talk so glibly about the failure of Christianity have a plenteous lack of acquaintance with history not to say a singularly inaccurate his-

torical perspective since they forget what Christianity has done and what was the magnitude of its task. Consider the cesspool which Europe morally was during the decline of the Roman Empire and what Christianity had to lift the human race out of. That it was done at all was a marvel. That the world might be much better than it is we may all agree, but how much worse might it not be and how much worse must it not have been if the condition of affairs from which Christianity delivered Europe had been allowed to continue its work unchecked? Again let us note that it was Christianity that taught that men were equal, regardless of race, colour or position, in the eyes of their Maker and thus did away with the intolerable idea that a slave had no rights either of life or family. It took a long time to eradicate the slavery idea but without Christianity it never would have been eradicated—pagan notions to-day prove that. It was Christianity which set a proper ideal of womanhood; pagans and Mohammedans still regarding her as a minister to man's pleasures and lusts only and even in many cases as devoid of a soul.

The old Roman civilisation was built on the stable basis of the family—the only stable basis of any state, failing which the state must founder. But the *patria potestas* was cruel and too great for it included the power of life and death. In the later days of the Empire when the family

had broken down under a régime of divorces which, as Seneca said, caused women to count time not by the consuls but by the husband whom they chanced to have at the time; the dry-rot which affects the political building thus attacked was stopped by Christianity alone when it came into power, for Christianity has always insisted on the importance of the family and the one basis of its stability—which entails that of the state—irrevocable marriages. To Christianity and to it alone are due the philanthropic movements which try to ameliorate the lot of the less fortunate of mankind; the standing example being the Hospital system a product of Christianity pure and simple, for, from the Hôtel Dieu of Paris, reputed to be the oldest foundation, down through the great old hospitals of London to our own day, all the early institutions and a very large percentage of the late have been and are the direct foundation of Christian organisations whilst the idea is purely or entirely Christian. And so with other movements like the work of Howard in prison reform—think of what pagan prisons are to-day!—of child labour and the like. But of course these movements naturally flow from the teaching of the Founder of Christianity and with regard to that happily there is no difference of opinion for even those who do not believe in His divinity admit that no such pure or lofty teaching can elsewhere be found nor anything



approaching it. And in His footsteps his followers have produced in books known to everybody, like *The Imitation of Christ*, teaching so unworldly yet so piercing in their appeal to human nature as to compel again the admiration of the unbelieving. St. Francis of Assisi could he have arisen outside Christianity? and he is cited because the world at large which knows him admires him whether they belong to the Catholic Church, which was his home, or not.

The same question might be asked respecting a host of other men and women full of the spirit of Christianity and responsible for much that makes life better and happier for those least able to help themselves. But that will be familiar matter to most readers. Let us turn for a moment to the idea of a future life offered by some of the great world religions. Hinduism and Buddhism in all their manifold ramifications and divisions may be said to offer no real immortality, for their ideal is the complete absorption of the soul into the divine essence as a drop of water which falls into the sea. Such all seem to agree is the real gist of their teaching. Buddhism set out to be a world religion; Hinduism did not; Islam emphatically did and what is its teaching on this point? As already pointed out it is an eternity for the true believer of sensual and sexual pleasures—no high ideal for earth as all will admit, and far below what Christianity sets before us as

a place where eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the spiritual joys stored up for those who have been faithful to the end. Not the Moslem joys for there we are specifically told that there will be neither marrying nor giving in marriage *sed sicut angeli*. It is for the reader to consider which of these teachings presents the highest ideal and what bearing that has on the question of Christianity and its position. One thing is certain namely that to attempt to wave Christianity aside as effete and out of date as the so-called intelligentzia sometimes tries to do, is ridiculous, for like it or not, it still remains the greatest force in the world to-day even if that fact is unacknowledged by many who unwittingly are swayed by it.

## A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE FOR THOSE DESIRING TO PURSUE FURTHER STUDY

This book is intended for the general reader; it is hoped that it may be instructive; it is not in any kind of way intended to be encyclopædic for the examples given are to explain abstract principles by concrete examples. Hence, after due consideration, it has been decided to omit foot-notes giving references to the books and papers quoted, since the experience of the author is that these draw off the attention of the reader without affording him any information for which he is specially anxious.

None the less it is hoped that there may be readers who will feel sufficient interest in the subject to desire to pursue it further. For their assistance the following list has been prepared. It contains all the more important works mentioned in the text, though minor books and all references to current literature in journals and the like have been omitted.

In the hope of rendering it more useful observations on some of the books have been added.

•  
ANGUS. *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity*. Charles Scribners Sons. 1925. A full and excellent account.

BOULLAYE, DE LA, *L'Étude Comparée des Religions*. Paris. Gabriel Beauchesne.

BREASTED. *A History of the Ancient Egyptians*. Murray. 1908.

BUDGE. *The Mummy*. Cambridge (Eng.) Univ. Press. 2nd. ed. (practically a new work.) 1925. A most exhaustive account of Egyptian matters containing the full account, from his Book of the Dead, of the funeral of Ani. The Coloured reproductions of Books of the Dead including that of Ani issued by the British Museum are volumes of great size which may be consulted in Public Libraries.

—*Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. 1899.

BURKITT. *The Religion of the Manichees*. Cambridge (Eng.) Univ. Press. 1925. The most recent and fullest account of this complicated question by a scholar of high reputation.

CARNOY. *Les Indo-Européens*. Vromont. Bruxelles. 1921. Contains much information respecting early religions.

CUMONT. *Oriental Religions*. (Translation) Chicago Open Court Publishing Co. 1911. The works of this author are classics especially in connection with Mithraism. The general reader will probably be content with that mentioned but the other and larger volumes in French must not be omitted from mention.

DILL. *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*. Macmillan. 1919.

FOURNIER. *Manuel de l'Histoire des Religions non Chrétiennes*. Tourcoing. 1921. A very useful small manual.

FOWLER, WARDE. *The Roman Festivals*. Macmillan. 1899.

—*The Religious Experience of the Roman People*. Macmillan. 1911. An invaluable work.

FRAZER. *The Golden Bough*. One vol. ed. Macmillan. 1922.

—*The Worship of Nature*. Vol. I. 1926. Macmillan.

—*Totemism and Exogamy*. Four vols. Macmillan. 1910.

It ought not to be necessary to say that the works of Sir James Frazer O.M. are the greatest storehouses of information open to the student. The books named above are of special importance but of course there are others. The reader will distinguish between this author as a collector and arranger of facts, where he is beyond criticism and as a maker of theories where he is obviously open to attack. For criticism of his views, attention may specially be drawn to the writings of Andrew Lang (see below) and particularly to *Magic and Religion*.

GILES. *Civilisation of China*. Williams and Norgate. 1911.

—*Confucianism and Its Rivals*. Ibid. 1915.

HALLIDAY. *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*. Hodder and Stoughton. 1925. A book of great interest and erudition but so well written as to fascinate any reader.

HUBY. *Christus*. Manuel d' Histoire des Religions. Paris, Gabriel Beauchesne. First ed. 1913. Under this rather misleading title there are given a number of separate accounts of different religions by acknowledged authorities. It may be noted that many of these

appeared in English (with other matter not in Christus) in the five volumes of the *History of Religions* issued from 1910 onwards by the English Catholic Truth Society, very useful accounts now unfortunately out of print.

HUME. *The World's Living Religions*. Charles Scribners Sons. 1924. A most excellent brief synopsis with comparisons of the Religions of to-day.

JEVONS. *An Introduction to the History of Religion*. Methuen. 1896. First ed. This work, which has run into a number of editions, is of first importance and, as will be noted, much use has been made of it in this book. It is of course strongly tinged by the writer's totemistic views which must be taken into consideration and discounted when studying the book.

KELLOGG. *Handbook of Comparative Religion*. Philadelphia. Westminster Press. 1899.

—*The Genesis and Growth of Religion*. Macmillan. 1892.

These works written by a missionary of long experience in the field are important as the work of one possessed of first hand information and a very clear mind.

LANG, ANDREW, *Myth, Literature and Religion*. Longmans. 1887.

—*Custom and Myth*. Ibid. 1893.

—*Modern Mythology*. Ibid. 1897.

—*The Making of Religion*. Ibid. 1898.

—*Magic and Religion*. Ibid. 1901.

The late Andrew Lang, well known as an author in many directions was accustomed to describe himself

as "a belletristic trifler." In fact he was a man of very wide ethnological reading and of keen intellect whose criticisms of various theories prevalent in his day and indeed to-day have in many cases remained unanswered and are in the opinion of the present writer often unanswerable. The last named book is perhaps that on which the reader may be recommended to make a commencement.

LE ROY. *The Religion of the Primitives*. (Translation.) Macmillan. 1922. This book, the work of a missionary who spent his entire life amongst the inhabitants of Central Africa, is a most valuable piece of first hand information excellently translated.

LOWIE. *Primitive Religion*. Boni and Liveright. 1924. Strongly to be commended as full of first hand information and sturdy common sense on ethnological theories.

MAINAGE. *Les Religions de la Préhistoire*. Paris, Desclée. 1921. This book by an authority on the subject gives the best account with discussion of their significance of the cave paintings in Europe and other objects believed to have been associated with early religion.

MAINE. *Ancient Law*. There have been many editions of this classic. That published by Routledges in their New University Library is handy in size and cheap in price.

MALINOWSKI. *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. Norton and Co., New York. 1926.

—*Magic, Science and Religion* an article in *Science, Religion and Reality*. Macmillan. 1925.

Anything from the pen of this writer is worth reading he having first hand knowledge of his subject and a useful supply of common sense.

MARETT. *The Threshold of Religion*. Methuen. 1909. Anything which this writer produces is always interesting even when, as in his Frazer<sup>1</sup> Lecture, it is smartly polemical. The conception of *mana* will be found developed in this volume for criticism of which see Malinowski and Schmidt.

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